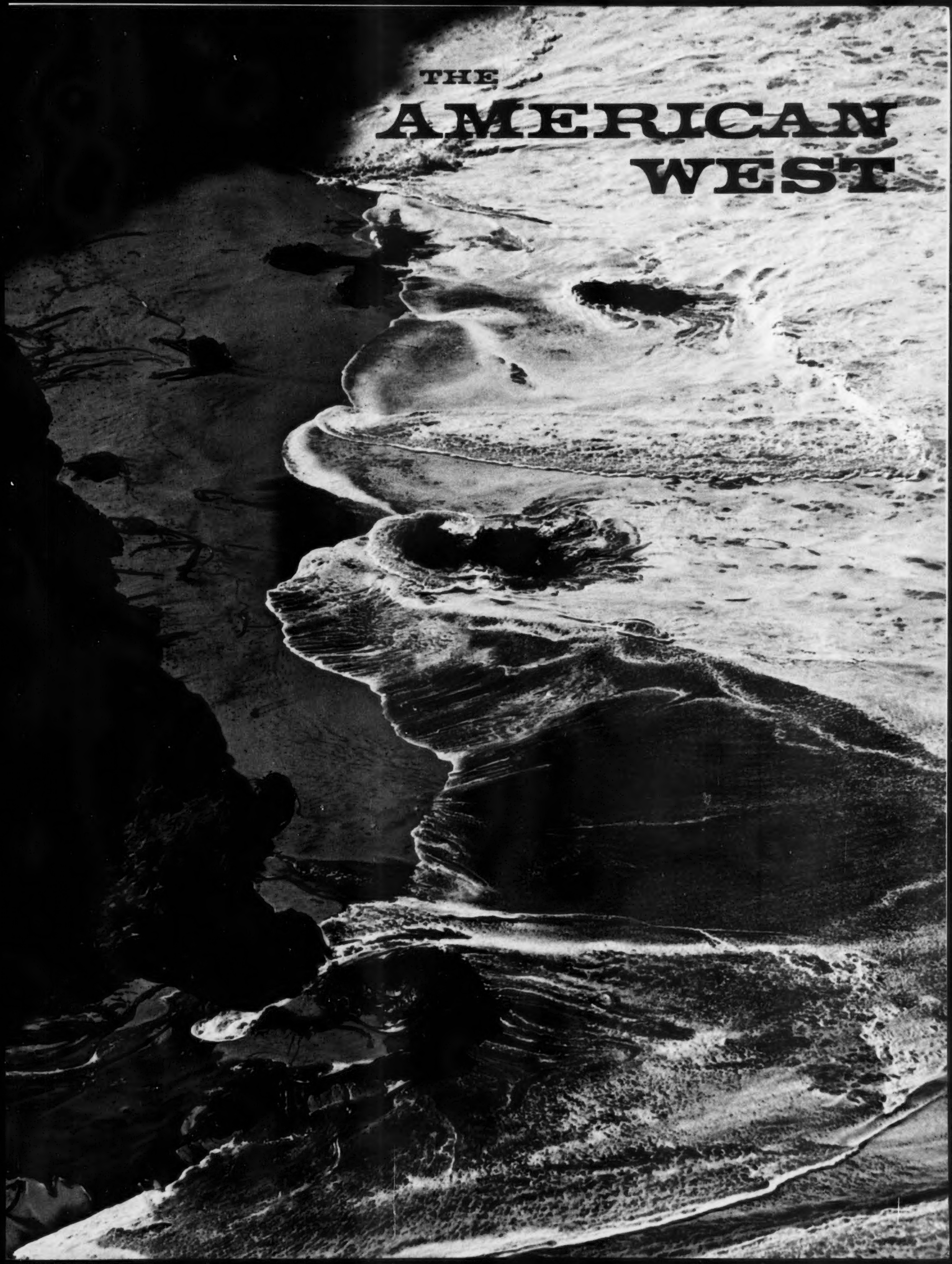
THE
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COVER: Sea and land meet on the Big Sur coastline south of Monterey, California.

(Photograph by Steve Crouch)

THE

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THE MAGAZINE OF WESTERN HISTORY

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May 1973/Volume X, Number 3

Sponsored by the Western History Association

PUBLISHED SIX TIMES PER YEAR—JANUARY/MARCH/MAY/JULY/SEPTEMBER/NOVEMBER

"Worthless" Lands—Our National Parks by Alfred Runte *4*
The Enigmatic Past and Uncertain Future of America's Scenic Wonderlands

The Fantastic World of Orth Stein by Donald E. Bower *12*
Mythical Exploits of a Frontier Jules Verne

The Legacy of Buena Vista by Brian McGinty *17*
Agoston Haraszthy and the Development of California Viticulture

Steam Tractors by Art Fee *24*
A Pictorial Review of Monsters That Changed the West

Collector's Choice by Martin Cole *32*
The Blue Whistler: A Cannon That Fought in Two Wars and Under Three Flags

The Great Arabian and American Deserts by Lawrence R. Murphy *36*
Significant Parallels—and Notable Differences—in the Geography, Climate, and History of Two Regions Half a World Apart

Peter Skene Ogden: Fur Trader Extraordinaire by Clarence P. Socwell *42*
Trapping, Exploration, and Adventure on the Canadian and American Frontiers

A Matter of Opinion *48*
THE AMERICAN WEST: *A Potpourri of Opinion*

The American West Review *49*

THE AMERICAN WEST is published in January, March, May, July, September, November, by American West Publishing Company, 599 College Avenue, Palo Alto, California 94306. Single copies: $2.00. Subscriptions: $9.00; two years $16.00; three years $23.00 *(outside U.S. $1.00 per year extra)*. Manuscripts and communications from subscribers should be sent to the above address; members of the Western History Association should address all communications to Everett L. Cooley, P.O. Box 8005, Salt Lake City, Utah 84108.
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Gateway Arch, clad in stainless steel and soaring above the St. Louis skyline to a height of 630 feet, fittingly symbolizes that city's historic role as "Gateway to the West."

GENE AHRENS

"WORTHLESS" LANDS

—OUR NATIONAL PARKS

The Enigmatic Past and Uncertain Future of America's Scenic Wonderlands

By Alfred Runte

AN ABUNDANCE OF PUBLIC LAND that seemed worthless —not environmental concern or esthetic appreciation—made possible the establishment of most national parks in the United States. Nothing else can explain how esthetic conservationists, who in the past have represented only a small minority of Americans, were able to achieve some success in a nation dominated by a firm commitment to industrial achievement and the exploitation of resources. A surplus of marginal public land enabled the United States to "afford" esthetic conservation; national parks protected only such areas as were considered valueless for profitable lumbering, mining, grazing, or agriculture. Indeed, throughout the history of the national parks, the concept of "useless" scenery has virtually determined which areas the nation would protect and how it would protect them.

The 1872 campaign to establish a national park at Yellowstone in the northwest corner of Wyoming Territory first exemplified what was to become a prevailing congressional attitude —that lands set aside for their scenic beauty must not possess exploitable natural resources of any real value. Most historians have concentrated on the importance of Yellowstone as the first national park and have ignored its significance as a precedent for subsequent federal park legislation. But Congress was not as concerned about scenic preservation or the protection of Yellowstone's natural wonders as it was in the future of business interests in that part of the West. In fact, it was the economic potential of the Yellowstone region that became the overwhelming point of discussion and the major topic of congressional debate. In the Senate, for example, George Edmunds of Vermont described the area as "so far elevated above sea level" that it could not "be used for private occupation at all." Therefore, he assured his colleagues, Congress could "do no harm to the material interests of the people in endeavoring to preserve it." Representative Henry L. Dawes of Massachusetts, who steered the Yellowstone bill through the House, described the proposed park in similar fashion—not only was the region "rocky, mountainous, full of gorges," and "unfit for agricultural purposes," but even Indians could "no more live there than they can upon the precipitous sides of the Yosemite Valley." Although this was something of an overstatement, the point was clear. Yellowstone was commercially useless to the nation, and Congress could afford to protect it in accordance with the wishes of a few American citizens.

Of course, the somewhat exaggerated declarations of Senator Edmunds and Congressman Dawes could be considered simply a tactic to persuade Congress to their point of view. But both men based their claims upon the observations of Dr. Ferdinand V. Hayden, head of the U.S. Geological and Geographical Survey of the Territories. Perhaps Edmunds and Dawes could get away with some embellishment of their position, but Hayden could not, for he depended upon federal appropriations to continue his survey work in the West. During the summer of 1871—in response to earlier reports about Yellowstone—he visited that remote wilderness with a team of scientists, artists, and photographers. Although Hayden was already recognized as a highly practical geologist and surveyor, his fame soared in the wake of his Yellowstone adventures, and it is not surprising that Congress turned to him for an accurate and unbiased description of the region when the park bill came up for consideration.

Convinced that the thermal features of Yellowstone deserved protection for their scientific value, Hayden gladly complied with the request of Representative Mark Dunnall to prepare a statement for the House Committee on the Public Lands. In this document he emphasized that the nation would sacrifice no valuable resources in preserving the geysers and boiling springs of Yellowstone. "The entire area comprised within the limits of the reservation contemplated in this bill is not susceptible of cultivation with any degree of certainty," he assured Congress, "and the winters would be too severe for stock-raising." He furthermore pointed out that settlement in an area like Yellowstone was "problematical" unless there were "valuable mines to attract people." But the mountains of Yellowstone were "all of volcanic origin," and it was highly improbable "that any mines or minerals of value" would ever be found in the region. In closing, Hayden stressed that the proposed park took "nothing from the value of the public domain" and was "no pecuniary loss to the government."

In view of Hayden's position within the federal government, few congressmen could have doubted the sincerity and validity of his conclusion that Yellowstone had little future commercial value. Nevertheless, Senator Edmunds went to the trouble of assuring his colleagues that Congress could later repeal the Yellowstone Park Act if it stood "in anybody's way," and Representative Dawes reminded the House that the government

The significance of Yellowstone National Park, in the author's view, is that its creation set a precedent in the interests of business, not environment.

ED COOPER

parted "with no control" of the reserve and "put no obstacle in the way of any other disposition of it." Although some congressmen were still opposed to the park measure, as evidenced by a 115 to 65 House vote, the legislation passed and received President Ulysses S. Grant's approval on March 1, 1872.

After the Yellowstone Park bill became law, Congress forgot all about scenic preservation. Not surprisingly, for as the Yellowstone debates had revealed, few congressmen—even sponsors of the legislation—strongly embraced the concept of esthetic preservation. Yellowstone had not been preserved for what it was, but rather for what it was not. In subsequent years this basic position would be reaffirmed in virtually every piece of national park legislation. The heritage of Yellowstone, therefore, was that its creation set a precedent for preserving nature in the interest of business, not in the interest of the environment.

DURING THE CLOSING YEARS of the nineteenth century, however, concern about the future of the nation's dwindling forests led to federal action that also seemed in the best interests of esthetic conservation. In 1890 Congress established three forest reservations, all in the High Sierra of California. Secretary of the Interior John W. Noble, to whose department the management and protection of the reserves was entrusted, promptly designated the areas as national parks, for he interpreted scenic preservation as the primary intent of Congress in setting them aside. The new parks—Yosemite, Sequoia, and General Grant—at first embraced more than one million acres of rugged mountain country, much of it the natural range of the *Sequoia gigantea,* or Sierra redwood. For many years a small number of Californians had been calling for the protection of these large trees, which were internationally recognized as wonders of the natural world.

ED COOPER

But in creating these reserves, Congress had in no way departed from its criterion of 1872—that lands had to be worthless before they could be perpetually protected by the federal government; by 1890 it was a well-known fact that Sequoia wood fiber was too brittle for most construction purposes. And because of their inaccessibility and distance from the nearest markets, most forests in the rugged Sierra country were effectively off limits to profitable exploitation anyway.

Congress soon realized, however, that large areas of accessible mineral and timber wealth had been included in the Yosemite reserve. Throughout the 1890s legislation was introduced to have these valuable resources deleted from the park and returned to the public domain. Finally, in 1905, based upon the recommendations of a special Yosemite study commission, Congress cut 540 square miles of mineral, lumber, and grazing lands from the original 1890 reserve. Esthetic conservationists—most notably the members of the Sierra Club—vigorously protested this action, but to no avail. The time when the federal government would protect scenery that was not otherwise useless was still a long way off.

Between 1899 and 1919 Congress established several more national parks, including Mount Rainier in Washington (1899), Crater Lake in Oregon (1902), Glacier in Montana (1910), Rocky Mountain in Colorado (1915), and Grand Canyon in Arizona (1919). Like the parks formed before them, however, these areas were considered worthless for industrial or commercial uses. Sponsors of the new parks were able to show that such high-country areas contained little of economic value to the nation—no significant timber, mineral, grazing, or agricultural resources.

In 1902, for example, Representative Thomas H. Tongue of Oregon agreed with C. Hart Merriam, chief of the U.S. Biological Survey, that the proposed Crater Lake National Park was "a very small affair—only eighteen by twenty-two miles." It contained "no agricultural land of any kind" but was simply "a mountain, a little more than nine thousand feet in altitude, whose summit [had been] destroyed by volcanic action." Representative Tongue further declared that, at his request, the boundaries of the proposed park had been drawn "so as to include no valuable land." The only object of the bill, he reassured the House, was "simply to withdraw" the region from the public domain "to preserve it in its present condition

Glacier National Park, described in Congress as "1,400 square miles of mountains piled on top of each other."

GENE AHRENS

Sequoias in Yosemite National Park. In 1905 Congress deleted 540 square miles of other "resources" from the park.

[for its] great beauty and scientific value."

Although no one in the House of Representatives objected to preserving the spectacular beauty of Crater Lake, most congressmen were very anxious to make sure that nothing else got preserved along with the scenery. John H. Stevens of Texas questioned his fellow Congressman about mineral resources in the proposed reserve, and Tongue repeated his assurances that "nothing of any value" would be set aside. Yet some members of the House remained skeptical, especially when they noticed that the bill before them prohibited mineral exploration in the park. Tongue argued that this was only to keep people from entering the reserve "under the name of prospecting" when their real intent was to destroy "the natural conditions of the park and the natural objects of beauty and interest." But no one in the House was convinced by Tongue's argument, nor did anyone believe him when he stated that the only mineral resources in the area were "in the other range of mountains opposite from" the Crater Lake region. Only after he had reluctantly agreed to an amendment allowing mining ventures in the national park would his colleagues give further consideration to the bill. Thus amended, the Crater Lake measure cleared the House, passed through the Senate without debate, and received President Theodore Roosevelt's signature on May 23, 1902.

The pattern of the Crater Lake debates persisted as Congress considered legislation for the Glacier, Rocky Mountain, and other scenic reserves. A Glacier National Park bill was first introduced to Congress in 1908 and was considered by the upper and lower houses early in 1910. The Senate debate was a lengthy one, with Senators Thomas H. Carter and Joseph M. Dixon of Montana championing the proposed scenic reserve for their state. Senator Boies Penrose of Pennsylvania addressed the Senate in support of the bill, expressing his familiarity with the region under consideration: "I have hunted and traveled over every inch of the [Glacier] country and it is one of the grandest scenic sections of the United States, absolutely unfit for cultivation or habitation, and as far as I know, not possessing any mineral resources." Senator Penrose therefore proclaimed the region "admirably suited for a park."

Still the Senate did not take immediate action. When debate resumed weeks later, Senator Dixon rose to describe Glacier as "fourteen hundred square miles of mountains piled on top of each other," containing "no agricultural land whatever." When Dixon later repeated this statement in yet another discussion of the Glacier bill, Senator Joseph W. Bailey of Texas expressed his displeasure that the park would require some "expenditure of public money to make much of a park out of mountains piled on top of each other." He agreed, however, that a park was "as good a use [as could] be made of that land." Since the proposed legislation protected the rights of prospectors, allowed the Forest Service to remove "dead and down timber," and provided for the construction of Reclamation Service dams and irrigation projects, few congressmen in either house found reason to object to the final draft. After all, no vested economic interests were affected, nor was any federal agency prevented from developing parkland to meet the economic demands of businessmen, agriculturists, or mining concerns.

The Rocky Mountain National Park bill of 1915 also gave Congress little reason for objection. Even before the park plan was introduced on Capitol Hill, sponsors of the preserve reduced its total area by two-thirds to satisfy protests from Colorado mining and grazing interests. The Senate did not debate the measure, but discussion in the House was quite spirited. Congressman Edward T. Taylor of Colorado eloquently espoused the beauty—and uselessness—of the area under discussion. The contemplated park, he claimed, was "marvelously beautiful," yet contained "comparatively little timber of merchantable value," and its altitude was much "too great for practical farming." Indeed, it had "been said thousands of times by people from all over the world that the one great and only thing this region [was suitable for was] a national park"; it had "no value for anything but scenery." The House agreed and passed the bill, at the same time making

certain that it protected all rights of railroaders, prospectors, and the Reclamation Service to enter and use the parklands.

AS THE ABOVE EXAMPLES have indicated, Congress was willing to preserve scenery only if it was useless to the economic interests of the nation. Furthermore, the government fully recognized that what was worthless in 1872 or 1910 might not be valueless at some time in the future. For this reason Congress included loopholes in national park legislation which authorized the reevaluation of parklands in light of new information about their worth. Nor was the government reluctant to change its mind about the sanctity and permanence of the scenic reserves, a fact that was proved dramatically by the Hetch Hetchy Valley dam controversy of 1908–1913. In December 1913, after a heated and highly emotional battle, Congress authorized this reservoir project within Yosemite National Park, ignoring preservationists' fears that damming Hetch Hetchy would set a serious precedent for future intrusions into other national parks and monuments. Of course, this precedent had already been set—at least philosophically—back in 1872 when supporters of the Yellowstone bill argued that the national park did not have to be permanent if it obstructed economic progress. The Hetch Hetchy Dam—along with the Yosemite boundary adjustments of 1905—merely proved what every piece of national park legislation implied: national parks in the United States could exist only if they were economically worthless to begin with and remained worthless.

Yet Americans concerned about the future of the national parks were determined to protect them from further encroachments. Spurred on in large part by their Hetch Hetchy defeat, esthetic conservationists nationwide lobbied for and won congressional approval of the National Park Service Act in 1916. The purpose of this legislation was to place the national parks under the management of a separate government agency fully committed to scenic preservation and, of equal importance, capable of doing battle with politicians and federal agencies dedicated to policies not in keeping with the principles of esthetic conservation. Steven Mather, a California millionaire and member of the Sierra Club, became the first director of the Park Service. Another native of the Golden State, Horace M. Albright of the Interior Department, was appointed assistant director. Under their direction the existing national parks were greatly improved while other areas of outstanding scenic significance were added to the park system.

Nevertheless, Mather and Albright faced difficult obstacles in their efforts to acquire commercially useful lands for parks. In 1916, for example, they began work on a plan to add the

Congressional proponents of Crater Lake National Park were careful to point out to their colleagues that the proposed reserve would "include no valuable land."

GENE AHRENS

Grand Teton Mountains and Jackson Hole, Wyoming, to Yellowstone National Park. This project had first been suggested in 1898, but opposition from settlers and ranchers in the Teton country had killed the measure. During 1917 and 1918, however, Mather and Albright convinced Congressman Frank Mondell of Wyoming to support the Yellowstone addition. In February 1919 his bill passed the House but failed to receive Senate approval. Senator John F. Nugent of Idaho, whose state bordered the proposed park addition on the west, had erroneously claimed that valuable grazing lands along the Wyoming-Idaho boundary would become parkland if the Yellowstone addition was authorized. It is therefore not surprising that Mondell's bill failed. Congress was not about to create a national park if there was even a suspicion that doing so would have an impact on established economic interests.

In 1929 Congress finally established a Grand Teton National Park, yet it was a far cry from the reserve first established by Mather and Albright. Only the mountain peaks and a few small lakes at their base received park status. In fact, the northern third of the Teton chain was excluded from the park on the assumption that asbestos deposits there might be valuable. Not until 1950, after a long and emotional battle, was Jackson Hole finally added to the park. This important addition was not a result of congressional initiative, however, but was due to the generosity of John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Beginning in 1927 the philanthropist purchased thirty-five thousand acres of ranchlands and farmlands in Jackson Hole, then fought for two decades to have these properties added to Grand Teton National Park along with the remaining public lands in the valley and the rest of the mountain range.

Thus, when Congress refused to make adequate appropriations to add commercially valuable properties to the park system, it took "enlightened supporters" like Rockefeller to save unique scenic resources for the public. Rockefeller's contribution to the national parks alone has been estimated at seventy-five million dollars. Five million of this amount was donated to acquire priceless timberlands for the Great Smoky Mountains National Park on the Tennessee–North Carolina border. Two million more helped to save rare groves of California coastal redwoods, some of which in 1968 became part of the Redwood National Park. Even Steven Mather, whose fortune in no way matched Rockefeller's, contributed heavily to the national parks. Not only did Mather purchase private inholdings within the reserves for parklands, he often paid the salaries of Park Service personnel not supported by the federal treasury. Unquestionably, without the aid of Rockefeller, Mather, and others, some jewels of the modern national park system would not exist, for exceptions to the "useless scenery philosophy" were made possible by private initiative, not by the will of Congress.

After 1950, however, as environmental issues gained public acceptance and support, legislators began to give more attention to the national parks. No longer could Congress ignore the recreational and wilderness needs of a rapidly expanding population in the midst of a deteriorating environment. Early in the century national parks had received very few visitors, but by the 1950s tens of millions of Americans sought the freedom and serenity of the nation's scenic reserves. More leisure time, better roads, and higher incomes all had their effect, making it possible for more and more people to enjoy the splendors of Yellowstone, Yosemite, and other federal recreation areas. Coupled with a growing concern about environmental quality, the popularity of the national parks had at last forced Congress to take effective action to upgrade the

Grand Teton National Park was created in 1929, but it took until 1950 for the adjacent Jackson Hole country to be added—largely through the generosity of a private citizen.

GENE AHRENS

park system. Between 1956 and 1966 the federal government funded Mission 66, a project designed to modernize reserve facilities by the fiftieth anniversary of the Park Service. During the 1960s other park system additions and improvements came in rapid succession. In 1961 Congress authorized the Cape Cod National Seashore in Massachusetts, the first national park purchased outright by the federal government. By 1968 numerous other areas had been added to the park system, including the highly controversial Redwoods National Park, formed around a nucleus of three California state parks.

BUT IT IS CLEAR that the United States has not yet relinquished its nineteenth-century "preservation" traditions. The government protects primarily what the business ethic of the nation allows it to protect. The Wilderness Preservation Act of 1964, for example, permits mineral explorations and mining operations in wilderness reserves until 1983, activities glaringly inconsistent with the purpose of wild country. And many environmentalists strongly contend that the new Redwoods National Park was actually established in the interests of the lumber industry. The bulk of the park, they point out, has merely represerved already-existing state parks; vital buffer zones between key parklands and lumber company properties have not been established.

The situation may be further exemplified by the Grand Canyon Dam controversy of the mid-1960s. Between 1963 and 1966 Congress considered proposals to authorize reservoirs in Grand Canyon National Park and Grand Canyon National Monument. Public outrage resulted in the defeat of these plans, but the fact that they were even proposed dramatizes the tenuous position of national parks in the United States. To put it in a constitutional perspective, what Congress has given, Congress can always take away. Indeed, the original Grand Canyon National Park legislation, passed in 1919, provided for the dam projects sought by the Bureau of Reclamation forty-five years later.

And while it is true that outdoor recreation industries derive great economic benefit from national parks and profit from open spaces regardless of what resources they contain, the economics of tourism have seldom induced Congress to set aside scenic regions containing extensive mineral deposits, lumber, or grazing lands. In the eyes of most federal officials, the nation has enough land to have its cake and eat it too. The resources have therefore gone to the industrial interests. With few exceptions nature lovers have won the rocks.

This is not to say that some "rocks" in the national parks are not truly grand and beautiful. In fact, most national parks are uniquely beautiful, but the question still remains whether natural beauty in America must first be commercially useless before it can be protected and appreciated. No one would deny that there is only one Grand Canyon in the world. Yet that "one of a kind" natural wonder was almost flooded when engineers "discovered" its reservoir potential. If such acts could even be considered during the present age of environmental awareness, no national park, now or in the future, seems safe from attack. Indeed, as park history has shown over and over again, such threats to the reserves are not only to be expected, they are inevitable. Given these official attitudes, it is indeed fortunate the United States was blessed with so much "worthless" land from which to carve out a national park system. As for the future of the parks, perhaps John Muir provided the best warning in 1910 when he wrote: "Nothing dollarable is safe, however guarded."

DAVID MUENCH, FREELANCE PHOTOGRAPHERS GUILD

Attempts to allow a reservoir project in the Grand Canyon have underlined the vulnerability of existing parklands.

Alfred Runte *is a graduate student in American conservation history at the University of California, Santa Barbara.*

The Fantastic World of Orth Stein

Mythical Exploits of a Frontier Jules Verne

By Donald E. Bower

HE WAS A LITTLE MAN, small of stature and unimposing. But his high starched collar, his derby hat, and the eastern cut of his suit set him apart in the rip-roaring, wild and woolly, up-and-down boom town of Leadville, Colorado, deep in the heart of the ribald Rockies and nearly astride the Continental Divide.

The year was 1880, and the whole town was buzzing with excitement and puffing with prosperity. The area had seen good times before. Back in the sixties in nearby California Gulch, gold had been so plentiful that placer miners had earned two thousand dollars a day. But by 1876 the total gold yield had dropped to twenty thousand dollars a year and the community was, according to doom-peddlers, already dead, with nobody left to bury it. Then came the rich silver strikes at Camp Bird, at the Yankee Doodle, the Charlestown, the Morning Star, and the Little Chief. Population in the California Gulch area skyrocketed from a few hundred in 1878 to an estimated thirty thousand a year later. A group of miners met at Gilbert's Wagon Shop, formed a new town, and named it Leadville.

The little man jumped off the high platform of the Denver and Rio Grande train and stared in disbelief at the scene he beheld. To the east the smoke from seventeen smelter plants clouded the snow-capped peaks, and to the south was Chestnut Street, thronged with hundreds of pedestrians who blocked the way of freighting teams and wagons piled high with machinery and merchandise of every description. As the *Leadville Daily Chronicle* reported: "Leadville never sleeps. The theatres close at three in the morning. The dance houses and liquoring shops are never shut. The highwayman patrols the streets in quest of drunken prey. . . . The music at the beer halls is grinding low. A party of carousers is reeling through the streets. . . . Carbonate Hill with her scores of brightly blazing fires is Argus-eyed. Three shots are heard down below the old court house. A woman screams. There is a fight in a State Street casino. . . . A man stands dreaming in front of the Windsor looking at the stars—he is away from home. A barouche holding two men comes rushing up Chestnut Street. . . . A big forest fire lights up the mountains at the head of Iowa Gulch. . . . The streets are full of drunken carousers taking in the town."

In Leadville, nothing was unbelievable. And this, events would prove, made Leadville a perfect place for soft-spoken Orth Stein, the perceptive journalist just arriving from Lafayette, Indiana, in answer to a plea from Carlyle Channing Davis, publisher of the *Chronicle*. This was a time when real-life drama could be surpassed only by writing as imaginative as Stein's. For these were the days when Doc Holliday, dealing faro in Hyman's Saloon, could shoot Billy Allen and the dancing girls wouldn't miss a kick; and Pop Wyman's Great Saloon posted a sign: "Don't Shoot the Pianist—He's Doing

COURTESY OF DON AND JEAN GRISWOLD

MARVELOUS.

The Mammoth Cave of Colorado.

The First Exploration of Its Bewildering Labyrinths.

Accurate Illustrations of Some of Its Striking Features.

Jules Verne's Wildest Flights of Imagination

Outdone by Stern and Sober Reality.

Washing Gold in the Bowels of Mother Earth.

CATACOMBS OF ROME.

DOWN THE SHAFT

W A S H

Orth Stein's vivid description of the "Cyclopean Cave" was embellished with a detailed cross-section drawing.

Almost everything in the Leadville, Colorado, region loomed larger than life—as epitomized by this contemporary illustration of miners arriving by way of precipitous Mosquito Pass.

THE BETTMANN ARCHIVE

HISTORICAL PICTURES SERVICE

In 1877 Leadville boasted a few log cabins; three years later Chestnut Street was lined with business houses.

THE BETTMANN ARCHIVE

"Leadville never sleeps," marveled its **Daily Chronicle.** *By day and by night argonauts thronged the boardwalks.*

THE BETTMANN ARCHIVE

His Darndest." In 1880 Leadville—the Carbonate Camp—boasted of the tremendous growth of its businesses: 82 drinking saloons, 13 wholesale liquor houses, 21 gambling houses, 4 dance halls, 35 houses of prostitution, plus 19 hotels, 41 lodging homes, 38 restaurants, 4 theatres, and 3 newspapers.

Orth Stein had come on the early morning train from Pueblo, in southern Colorado. Since he wasn't expected until evening, he decided to do some sightseeing and joined the throng crowding its way up Chestnut Street. As he pushed eastward along the wooden sidewalks, past such landmarks as the Grand Hotel, Tabor's store and bank, and the O.K. Clothing Store, Stein noticed an unlikely number of shingles advertising doctors' offices. Inherent curiosity prompted a suspicious surmise. The journalist saw an opportunity to take advantage of his anonymity and, if luck was with him, inaugurate his *Chronicle* career with a brilliant expose.

When the "doctors" Stein visited saw his eastern garb, they readily accepted the glib young man's explanation that he was a medical student who had come to Leadville to finish his studies by getting some practical experience. Stein made several calls. Noticing that in almost every case the doctors' credentials were hung abnormally high on the walls; he took advantage of a moment alone in one of the waiting rooms, climbed on a chair, and as C. C. Davis later told it, "slipped the diploma out of the frame and into his pocket, having discovered that it was simply a working card in the plasterers' union." In the course of Stein's interviews, some of the doctors, fearing no harm from this lad and "growing confidentially communicative, boasted to him of their success in practicing without diploma, license or examination, while others chuckled over fat fees earned and to be earned."

It was late afternoon when the quiet journalist strolled into the *Chronicle* office, a sparkle in his eyes and a roll of manuscript under his arm. He introduced himself to Davis and waited impatiently as the publisher, who had no way of knowing that Stein had been in Leadville since early morning, outlined his assignment for the next day. Then he handed Davis the manuscript and explained his *sub rosa* activities during his first day in town.

"The mass of information he'd gathered," Davis wrote years later in his book *Olden Times in Colorado,* "showed that but comparatively few of the hundred alleged doctors were entitled to practice, and that the community was being outrageously plundered by a merciless gang of quacks." On the spot, Davis promoted Orth Stein from a cub reporter to the suddenly-created post of city editor.

When the *Chronicle* hit the streets the next day, Stein's story had been expanded to fill four columns, including a facsimile—reproduced almost full-size—of the plasterer's working card he'd removed from the doctor's office. As Davis said, "The article produced a distinct sensation, was the talk of the town for weeks following, and directly to it may be traced the inspiration for the laws of Colorado now [1916] governing the practice of medicine in that state."

Stein's tales frequently involved extraordinary caverns —a good topic for his carbonate-obsessed readership.

But this, Leadvillians were soon to discover, was only the beginning. Given a pen and pad, Orth Stein easily proved to be a match for the rough-and-tumble miners, the crafty merchants, the flamboyant dance-hall girls, and the gullible gamblers. As a writer, he provided his readers not only with stories to excite and irritate but also with wondrous tales which, whether they were believed or not, entertained and amused. He would become, before his short stay in Leadville ended, the Jules Verne of the western frontier.

With tongue in cheek, Carlyle Davis related how one of Stein's improbable tales started. "One Sunday afternoon Orth was wandering over the mountains of the main range when he stepped upon a bit of boggy ground, into which he began rapidly to sink, and, before realizing what had happened, found himself slipping down a slope of about forty-five degrees inclination into a vast underground cavern with arched entrances leading into it from all sides. . . . These, he later found, led into other vaulted chambers, of which there were scores, the entire excavated area comprehending several acres. . . ."

Running through the main cave was a stream heavy in gold content, and miners waded there, panning the precious metal. Mineral-bearing veins were clearly defined in the surrounding walls. Orth, not having been observed, determined to return to the surface as he had entered, make a survey, set his claim stakes, and immediately file discovery papers at the land office. But, Davis wrote, "an inspection of the incline showed the hopelessness of getting out that way. No other opening was visible and he was finally forced to make his presence known to the miners. Their attitude was not bellicose, and a truce was quickly arranged, by the terms of which Stein reserved for himself the privilege of the caverns as a show place, while he was to file upon the claim in the names of the original discoverers."

Orth Stein's genius did not allow him to be satisfied with a simple hoax. Elaborate details, multiple complications, the use of actual names of local residents and landmarks plus a continuing story thread added credibility to his fantasies. He set the stage for the story in the September 24, 1880, issue of the *Chronicle,* vividly describing his discovery of the cavern and the wonders he saw there—the great dome-like ceilings, the shimmering stalactites, and the glittering, mineral-filled walls. Even the names he used to christen the various chambers were evidence of both his imagination and his wit: the Chronicle Rotunda, Bessie's Boudoir, the Bridal Veil, the Serpents' Glen, the Davis Palace, and the Stein Gallery.

On October 3, having dutifully acknowledged that it was not fair to keep such a fantastic wonder to himself, Orth invited "approximately fifty gentlemen" to explore the cave. Again, names and identification of well-known Leadville citizens were used. A few days later, another story appeared, telling of group after group who had visited the Cyclopean Cave (as Orth had dubbed it along the way) and of new discoveries accompanying every visit.

Orth Stein described one of the tours: "Our guide led us down a declivity of perhaps forty-five degrees over a soft composition of sand and water, which forms the beginning of the main cave. It is very plain that this chamber of grandeur was formed by the action of water, the walls of lime on every side bearing traces of the battle of the angry whirlpool, which, having done its work at this point, gyrated off to tear its way through solid granite rock, leaving here and there in the forced channels huge boulders. By the weird light of our torches we were enabled to discover veins of sulphurets, gold-bearing rock and streaks of heavily-stained copper, showing conclusively that great bodies of valuable mineral lie hidden under the mountain."

He later delineated the main chamber: "Passing over and between rocks, the precious stalactites glittering in the dim light as we proceed, like stars in the firmament, we come to a mammoth rotunda, a crystal stream trickling through its clear, gravel floor. This has been called 'Chronicle Rotunda' in honor of the paper whose enterprise first made its wonders known to the public."

And with the finding of a hitherto unknown lake in the cavern, Stein waxed poetic: "no current seems to disturb its placid surface; no living thing finds life within its depths; all is silent as the grave within this buried pool, where never yet a breeze has stirred a ripple or a sunbeam played, save when a sleathy drop shoots from the darkness overhead and sinks into the black night below." Then he added this touch of mystery: "All of the lake is not visible from any one spot. In fact, it loses itself beneath a low rocky arch into the inky darkness beyond."

He painted the Stein Gallery as a place "where imagination really conjures up the galleries of the Vatican by moonlight, or rather by torchlight. The aperture is so small that it cannot yet be entered. The ceiling above is fringed with white, sparkling stalactites, in the light of a torch thrust in. This apartment," he says modestly, "has been named in honor of a Leadville newspaper man."

Finally, to allay any doubts that might linger in the reader's mind, he listed the names of the discoverers of the Cyclopean Cave: Alexander Chisholm, D. A. Williams, Duncan McDonald (all appearing in the 1880 Leadville city directory, with occupations as miners), Hugh McClennan, and Joseph Mivelle. Cecil C. Morgan, captain of the Tabor High Guards and well known in Leadville, later reportedly obtained a twenty-thousand-dollar bond on the underground wonderland and was supposedly negotiating with some London investors interested in purchasing and developing it. Although this turn of events might suggest that Stein had a bit of the swindler in his soul, there is no evidence that he realized any profits from his imaginative adventures while in Leadville. That Stein's story was convincing is indicated by the fact that the Cyclopean Cave was listed as one of the region's attractions in George Croffut's *Grip-Sack Guide to Colorado,* and that as late as 1962 the *Denver Rocky Mountain News* received a query as to its location.

Christmas of Stein's first year of editorship drew near. The snow piled high on Chestnut Street and Harrison Avenue, mighty Mount Massive glistened in the moonlight of the clear, star-studded Rocky Mountain sky, and Orth Stein's fertile spirit blossomed like the frost-flowers on the windows of his *Chronicle* office.

"Leadville is a land of wonders," he wrote, "but a curiosity eclipsing not only anything seen or heard in this country, but challenging the marvel and wonderment of the whole world, came to light a day or two ago, and were it not for the indisputable evidence of its exhibition, we would be tempted to regard it more as the wild dream of some miner than solid matter-of-fact reality.

"The Parnell mine, situated on the Mosquito Range and adjoining the well-known London lode, has workings consisting mainly of a shaft and incline, in all about 365 feet in vertical depth. Day before yesterday a miner was running a drift from the main shaft through a soft lime formation when his pick suddenly struck something exceedingly hard. A boulder in this formation being a very unusual thing, with some curiosity he tore out the intervening earth and disclosed imbedded in the lime something that made his eyes protrude with amazement. There, perfectly formed and apparently just from the wearer's foot, was a shoe; it seemed made of mildewed leather, but when the miner touched it he found it solid stone! With careful hands he removed it from the lime and carried it to the bottom of the shaft where the better light enabled him to make a close inspection.

"The shoe was quaintly formed, something as the antique sandal, with pieces at the side to protect the foot, and was evidently made with an eye to comfort more than grace or beauty. On the toe a patch had been placed, and the right hand side also showed traces of some cobbler's handiwork.

"The stone to which the shoe was turned was gray in color and presented a crystalline appearance on the surface, as if water had flowed over it. How the wonderful piece of foot gear came to be hundreds of feet below terra firma is a question for the antiquarian, but it is safe to say at least that its age can be reckoned by the thousands of years. The extraordinary curiosity is now on exhibition at Livezey's Fifth National Loan Office, in the Clarendon Hotel block and no one should miss the opportunity to inspect it."

How many *Chronicle* readers, one wonders, pulled on their boots and trudged through the snow to see Stein's non-existent petrified shoe. And what explanation did Livezey officials offer concerning its absence?

ALTHOUGH AS A nineteenth-century science-fiction writer Stein had no peer throughout the entire western frontier, his journalistic prowess in other, more legitimate directions, was equally noteworthy. During his two-year tenure as city editor at the *Chronicle*, he waged a relentless campaign against Leadville's public officials. Using his sharp editorial wit, he penned such comments as this, concerning the newly-elected mayor: "Mayor Humphreys is rather slightly built, not very heavy. He can readily and safely stand on a very flimsy platform."

He battled the town's corrupt justices of the peace, eventually forcing a goodly number to resign their posts; he exposed widespread bribery in the street commissioner's office, resulting in more resignations; and when construction of the new county courthouse was started in 1882, he wrote a story headlined:

WORSE THAN EVER

. . . .

THE BIGGEST STEAL AS YET ON RECORD

. . . .

A RANK OFFENSE THAT SMELLS TO HEAVEN

And, in typically Steinian fashion, he proceeded to tell of the extravagance of the courthouse privy. "To contribute his share towards a thorough overhauling of the county's finances and pecuniary standing," he wrote, "a *Chronicle* reporter thought it would be a good thing to look over some of the expense accounts connected with the new courthouse and, in order to do so, he concluded it would be best to commence at the very bottom. And at the very bottom he found, very naturally (we beg pardon of the reader), a privy. This structure —such a necessity, but scarcely ornamental, addition to every well-regulated courthouse—the reporter found built in a very simple and excessively uneconomical manner. It measures twelve by sixteen feet, is built of one thickness of brick and finished inside in the commonest manner of rough lumber. One hundred dollars—or, at the utmost $150—would be exceedingly good pay for such a structure, and would leave a handsome profit."

He then itemized the expenses, revealing that "the warrants so far allowed and paid out for the miserable thing" were $1,356.14.

BUT ALL EVIDENCE INDICATES that Orth Stein was more at home in the realm of fiction and that a part of life's amusement was to conjure up a questionable fantasy with such skill that it became a reality to the wild and woolly populace of the Carbonate Camp.

One of his most far fetched tales was published in the August 21, 1880, issue of the *Chronicle:*

A STRANDED SHIP

. . . .

Marvelous Discovery of Two Wandering Miners

. . . .

A Vessel in a Subterranean Cave Fifty Feet Under Ground

. . . .

The Ship Undoubtedly a Remnant of an Unknown Age

"A little less than a week ago," the story starts, "two wandering prospectors, while sinking a shaft near Red Cliff, made a

Continued on page 61

Vineyards of the Buena Vista Vinicultural Society near Sonoma, California, in a lithograph of the 1870s.

THE LEGACY OF BUENA VISTA

Agoston Haraszthy and the Development of California Viticulture

By Brian McGinty

IT WAS THE GRAND SWEEP OF THE BAY AND SHORE as much as the limestone hills that brought Agoston Haraszthy to the little valley thirty-five miles north of San Francisco in January of 1857. "The Prince may boast of the view from his palace," Haraszthy wrote of the Rhenish castle of Prince Metternich, "as I can from my ranch in Sonoma; or rather, I may boast of having scenery equal of that of Prince Metternich. It is true that I have no River Rhine, but in its place there lies the St. Pablo Bay."

The bay, indeed, was a plate of silver blue, swept with fine clouds blown by the region's high winds. And the low, brown hills were inviting. It was natural that he should call his home and vineyard *Buena Vista*—"Beautiful View." His earlier settlement in Wisconsin, on the broad flank of the Sauk prairie, had been christened *Szeptaj,* the Hungarian word for "Beautiful View."

There was more than a touch of the poet in Agoston Haraszthy, a visionary aristocrat of old Hungary who aban-

Old labels identifying beverages of the Buena Vista Vinicultural Society, which produced fine wines at its Sonoma holdings from 1863 until 1906.

doned his estates to cross the Atlantic to America at the beginning of 1840. In his adopted country Haraszthy retained the title of colonel acquired by virtue of service in the imperial guard of the Austrian Emperor Ferdinand, but he disdained the trappings of privilege. He traveled at first in the eastern states, then pioneered on the banks of the Wisconsin River. There he built lumber mills and operated steamboats, sold lots and planted hops (said to be the first in Wisconsin). But the dreamer was not satisfied, and in 1849 Haraszthy struck out for California.

In California, Haraszthy settled first at San Diego, where he served as sheriff and later as state assemblyman. Then he moved north to San Francisco and established a gold and silver refining business. Subsequently he was appointed assayer, and later melter and refiner, at the new U.S. Mint—the scene of what might have been a personal catastrophe. Large amounts of gold disappeared from the mint, and Haraszthy was attacked in the newspapers as a scoundrel and thief; in 1857 a grand jury indicted him for embezzlement of $151,000. San Franciscans shook their heads incredulously when the colonel explained that the losses were caused by faulty flues and chimneys, and by the necessity of working at night under forced drafts to meet the city's swelling demand for coin. According to him the gold had literally "gone up in smoke." Skeptics' incredulity gave way to wide-eyed amazement, however, when large quantities of the precious metal were scraped from the roofs of buildings adjoining the mint. In 1860 the government dropped all criminal charges against the colonel, and in 1861 a jury absolved him of civil liability.

HARASZTHY WAS DISTRESSED BY THE EPISODE, to be sure, but it did not dampen his energy. Even as the press castigated him, he was laying plans for what was to be the greatest adventure of his career. He was looking beyond the bricks and cobbles of the city toward the brown slopes inland from the coast. Already he knew his future would be there, where fog and sun touch above rocky hillsides.

"It is said that [in the past] the wine made at the Sonoma Mission," Haraszthy wrote in 1858, "was considered by the Padres the best wine raised in California, and the Priest here had to send his superiors living lower down some of his wine for their special use." It was the promise of good wine, as well as the splendid vista, that convinced Haraszthy to settle east of the old town of Sonoma in 1857. In Hungary he had raised grapes on a large scale, and in his travels through the eastern United States, he had looked continually for suitable soil and climate for their cultivation. At San Diego he had planted vines on the floor of Mission Valley. Later he tested the climate at San Francisco's Mission Dolores and experimented with vineyards in the rolling hills at Crystal Springs, south of San Francisco. But none proved satisfactory.

At Sonoma, Haraszthy's land began on the floor of the valley and ran up into the foothills of the Mayacamas

Mountains. Here the sun was warm at midday and a cool caress of fog crept over the low hills at twilight. There were a few old wood buildings on the property and a scattering of vines. "The farm contains one thousand acres of rich valley," Haraszthy wrote, "and four thousand acres of pastureland; one thousand acres fenced, and three hundred and fifty acres under cultivation for grain. There is oak-timber in abundance, and limestone, but not of first quality, besides fine building-stone quarries."

Northwest of Sonoma lay the well-kept vineyard of Mexican General Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo, former military governor of California. Vallejo had produced vintages from his Sonoma vines for more than twenty years, and some of his wines, red and robust, had excited praise. But in all the valley there were not more than fifty acres in vineyards, and nearly all of the vines were of the "Mission" variety traditionally planted by the padres. The dusky mission vine was of uncertain lineage, with blue-black fruit and full leaves and branches. To uncultivated palates, the wine from its grapes was pleasing enough, but experienced bibbers found it, by turns, "fiery and earthy" and "weak and insipid."

Haraszthy was convinced of the importance of making wines from the finest European vines. "No man can fully comprehend yet," he wrote in October of 1858, "what fine wines we will be able to make, when we have once the proper assortments of the different qualities of foreign grapes." He envisioned his vineyard at Sonoma as a grand laboratory in which he could experiment with vines and soil, demonstrating his theories and perfecting practical techniques. By the end of 1858, Haraszthy had imported more than 14,000 European vines and 12,000 rooted plants for his nursery at Sonoma. He dug two cellars in the limestone hills and built press-houses at their entrances. The cellars were dark and moist, with stout walls of brown stone that blended with the dry hills. Haraszthy began making wine and brandy, and produced a small lot of Tokay, on which he lavished special affection. This was the rich, golden "aristocrat of wines," an essence of overripe grapes metamorphosed by the scrubby spores of the "noble rot," and it was the pride of his native Hungary.

The name "Buena Vista" seemed made for Haraszthy's sprawling domain. On an elevation, within sight of the brown Mayacamas and the silver waters of San Pablo Bay, he built his home—a grand house, white and shining in the sun, with columns and porticoes, long verandas, and a finely graveled concourse.

In 1860, 70,000 vines were set out at Buena Vista, and the following year 135,000. With evangelical zeal, the colonel sent cuttings from his vines to all parts of the state, encouraging enterprises similar to his own and urging farmers to experiment with varied soils and climates. He entered his wines in the state fair and won top awards. He traveled throughout the region, making speeches before meetings of

Colonel Agoston Haraszthy: imperial guardsman, aristocrat, pioneer, farmer, civil servant, author, visionary, and "Father of California Viticulture."

Workers harvest grapes at Buena Vista during the 1870s, in a scene by noted photographer Eadweard Muybridge.

the state agricultural society, at county fairs, and to informal groups of farmers. To anyone who would listen, he preached, with contagious enthusiasm, the gospel of California wine.

The directors of the state agricultural society asked the Hungarian to prepare a paper on the history of wine in California and preferred techniques of viticulture. "I will comply with pleasure," Haraszthy wrote to the secretary of the society in early 1858, "but I am apprehensive that my limited abilities will not do justice to the case."

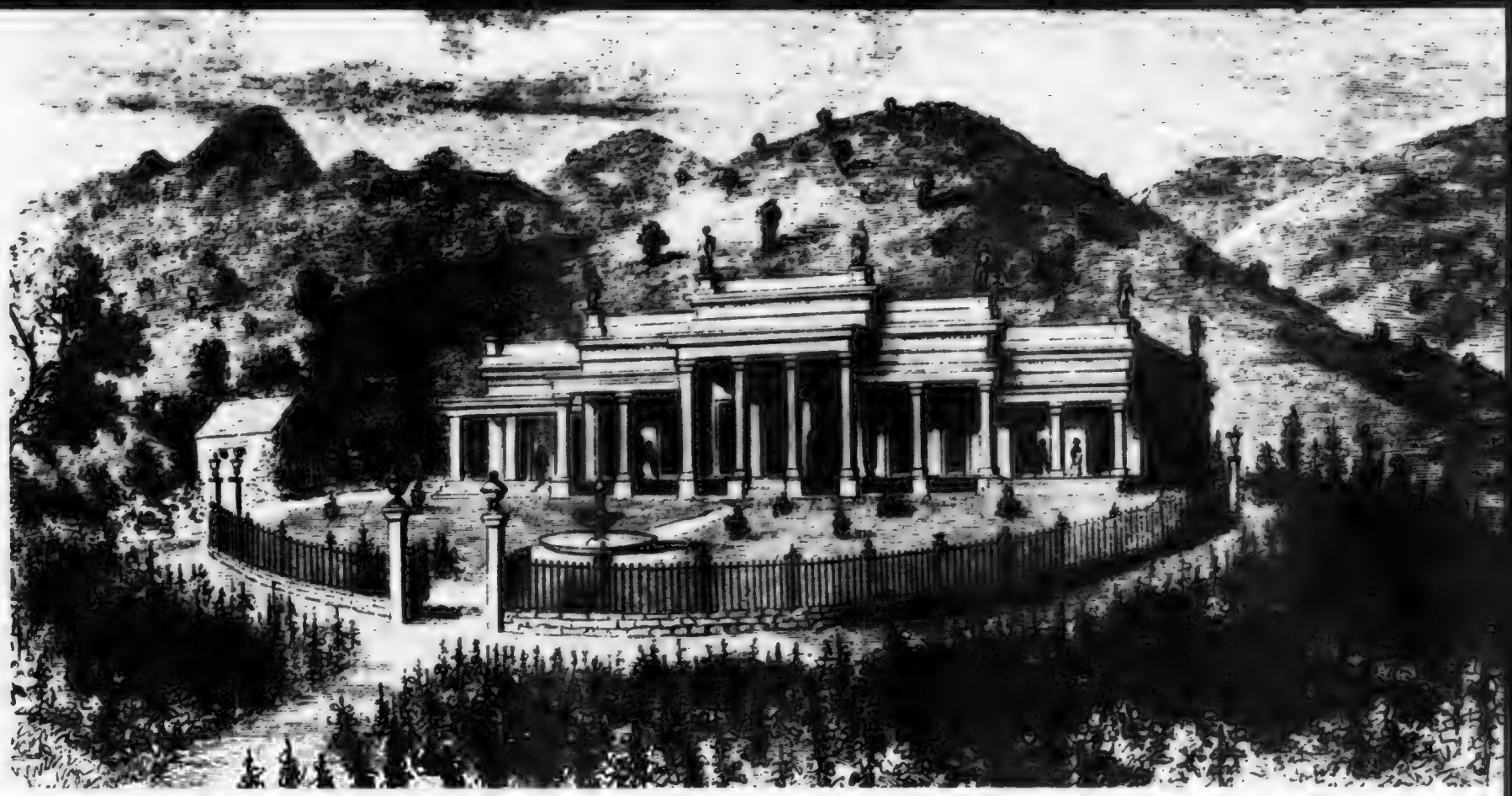
He had no need for apprehension. His *Report on Grapes and Wine of California*, written the same year, was informative, practical, and readable. It examined the most favorable conditions of climate, soil, and vineyard layout, and described techniques of planting, cultivating, pruning, harvesting, crushing, fermenting, and aging. The *Report* was printed and circulated widely in 1859 and served as a powerful stimulant to California's infant wine industry.

"Your father has a thousand ideas," a friend once told Haraszthy's son Arpad, adding that "the trouble with him is that he puts them all in motion." In a speech at the Sonoma County Fair in 1860, the colonel pleaded for the establishment of formalized viticultural instruction in California. "How differently we should be situated," he said—anticipating the University of California's agricultural work at Davis—"if we had an agricultural school, where a vineyard would be planted and cultivated, and wine made by competent professors. Our youths would then be taught the business in all its branches, and the older farmers, during their seasons of leisure, would learn all the various manipulations at a trifling cost." He urged the state to appoint a commission to explore the condition of wine-making in California and abroad. In response, the governor and legislature appointed three commissioners, one each to study and report on wines in California, South America, and Europe. Colonel Haraszthy was himself selected to make the European study, to tour the continent and collect vines suitable for distribution and planting in California.

He departed from San Francisco on June 11, 1861. In Washington, Secretary of State William Seward presented him with a special letter of introduction. Thus reinforced, he departed by steamer for Southampton on July 13.

It was a grand tour, and he enjoyed it immensely, though the legislature had provided no funds for his expenses. "I had to make use of my own means," he wrote, "which I cheerfully did, having been assured that my traveling expenses and money laid out for the purchase of the vines and trees would be refunded by the next legislature."

Joining his son Arpad, who was then studying champagne-making in France, Haraszthy traveled through Burgundy and Bordeaux, Germany and Switzerland, Italy and Spain. He asked questions everywhere and filled voluminous notebooks with his observations of wineries and winemaking customs and procedures. He placed orders for vines and fruits in Heidelberg, Genoa, Bordeaux, and Malaga, and he asked American consuls to send him additional shipments from Portugal, Greece, Egypt, and other countries he had not been able to visit. In all, he assembled more than one hundred thousand vines, representing some fourteen hundred varieties. Also included were choice specimens of almonds, oranges, lemons, figs, pomegranates, and Italian chestnuts.



Colonel Haraszthy's palatial home at Buena Vista (also visible in the photograph on the opposite page).

BY DECEMBER, Haraszthy was back in California, hastening to put the final touches on a book describing his journey. In January 1862 he reported to the legislature. "Various examinations," he said, "confirmed my previous conviction that California is superior in all the conditions of soil, climate, and other natural advantages to the most favored wine-producing districts of Europe, and that it has actually yielded more per acre. All this State wants to produce generous and noble wine is the varieties of grapes from which the most celebrated wines are made, and the same care and science in its manufacture."

His vines arrived at San Francisco in January. For his expense in procuring them, he asked that he be reimbursed in the sum of twelve thousand dollars. "To the people of this State," he added prophetically, "they will in time be worth as many millions." But Civil War raged in the nation, and Haraszthy was suspected of secessionist sympathies. The state senate's committee on agriculture recommended against the reimbursement, facetiously expressing concern that "if we thus show our willingness to worship Bacchus, our constituents might not *back us*." By a narrow vote, Republicans and Union Democrats in the legislature defeated the bill for Haraszthy's payment.

The rebuff did not daunt the colonel. A week after the unfavorable vote, the state agricultural society met in the state capital and elected him president. His book, *Grape-Culture, Wines, and Wine-Making,* published by Harper in New York, was eagerly received and read. "Few more readable books of travel have been produced than that portion of the work which describes his own personal experiences and observations," a reviewer for *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* wrote in December 1862. From his nursery at Buena Vista, the colonel began to distribute his vast store of European vines, sending them by mail or wagon to farms and ranches in secluded valleys throughout the state.

In March 1863 the Buena Vista Vinicultural Society was incorporated by Haraszthy and eight others, with the San Francisco banker William C. Ralston as financial backer. The colonel sold his vast holdings to the society and in turn was appointed superintendent. Haraszthy announced ambitious plans. By 1870 he hoped to have 3,500 acres in vineyard, and by 1873 there would be an annual wine production of 2,260,000 gallons.

Haraszthy was already acknowledged as a pioneer of viticulture in California, a missionary and builder with vision and energy. But his experiments with champagne-making at Buena Vista were unsuccessful, and the corporation was not paying dividends. The colonel was cleared of charges of extravagance, but he felt uncomfortable in the society, and finally, in the fall of 1866, he left his position as superintendent.

For a while he lived on a vineyard northwest of Sonoma owned by his wife and operated by his son, Attila. Then misfortunes began to strike. A fire broke out in one of his cellars, causing a distillery boiler to explode. To escape the scalding steam, Haraszthy jumped from a second-story window, falling heavily and permanently injuring his ankle. And his investments in San Francisco turned sour.

Haraszthy was fifty-six years old now. But his mind still stirred with the restless energy of youth, and his eyes once again searched the horizon.

In another Muybridge photograph, laborers unload grapes near Buena Vista's substantial press house and wine cellars.

BY THE SPRING OF 1868, the colonel was ensconced on a new baronial domain, in the rain forest of Nicaragua. He had obtained one hundred thousand acres of the finest land in Central America and a monopoly from the Nicaraguan government for the distillation of spirits. He planted vast acreage to sugar cane, making his plantation, the *Hacienda San Antonio*, the second largest in the country. Early in 1869 he returned to San Francisco to buy machinery and charter a vessel to open trade between California and the ports of Nicaragua, and by July was back on his plantation.

On August 27, 1869, San Francisco's *Alta California* published a letter written by Haraszthy's son Geza: "Father on the 6th of July left the house to go to a new landing (where they were putting up a sawmill) to meet a Mr. Lewis. But not finding him he spoke to the workmen, saying the mill was too far from the river, and would have been better on the other side. He then rode to the river, tied his mule, spread his oilcloth coat on the ground, rolled up his other coat, and must have laid down on it for a time. From thence his foot steps were traced to a large tree, the limbs of which reach to the other side of the river. About the middle of the stream, a large limb was found to be broken, from which we must conclude that father tried to cross the river by the tree and that losing his balance, he fell grasping the limb and was drowned." Haraszthy's body was never found—not surprisingly, perhaps, for the river was infested with crocodiles.

ARPAD AND ATTILA HARASZTHY continued to make wine in California after their father's death—Attila in Sonoma and Arpad at Orleans Hill, near Woodland, and in San Francisco, where he won fame as the maker of Eclipse champagne. The Buena Vista Vinicultural Society continued to operate until 1906, when the earthquake that leveled San Francisco cracked the winery walls and sealed the estate's limestone tunnels. Haraszthy's proud mansion, the gleaming landmark of the old estate, had disappeared earlier in the flames of a hungry fire.

The cellars in the hills behind Sonoma remained abandoned until the late years of World War II, when the old vineyards were revived and wines bearing the Buena Vista name were once again issued. In 1961 Governor Edmund Brown planted a Sylvaner vine on the grounds of the state capitol in Sacramento; it was a descendant of one of the cuttings brought to California by Haraszthy a century before, and the legislature passed a resolution "honoring the memory of Colonel Agoston

A modern view of one of Colonel Haraszthy's original winery buildings at Buena Vista.

Another surviving structure, said to be the oldest stone wine cellar in the Sonoma Valley.

PHOTOGRAPHS THIS PAGE BY S. G. MORLEY

Haraszthy as the father of modern California viticulture."

Unofficial recognition had come earlier. H. H. Bancroft, André Simon, and myriad others acknowledged the Hungarian as the "Father of California Viticulture." Alexis Lichine averred that it was Haraszthy's "gift of a wide assortment of grapes and his continual research that stimulated the great modern expansion of the industry." One of the vines brought to California by Haraszthy in the early 1850s was the Zinfandel. By 1970 more than twenty-one thousand acres of California vineyards were planted to Zinfandel, the second largest acreage for a single variety in the state.

At Buena Vista, in the wooded hills east of Sonoma, the old wineries still operate by a dark, twisting brook, clogged with berries and weeds, and shaded by towering eucalyptus trees. Inside, the cellars are dark and moist; outside, their brown walls blend with the dry hills. The vineyards of Buena Vista stretch from the old cellars, across the rolling hillsides and sloping valley. Beyond them are the waters of the bay, a plate of silver blue, swept with fine clouds blown by the wind.

Brian McGinty *is an attorney and writer. Although a native of California, he is currently residing in Paris, France.*

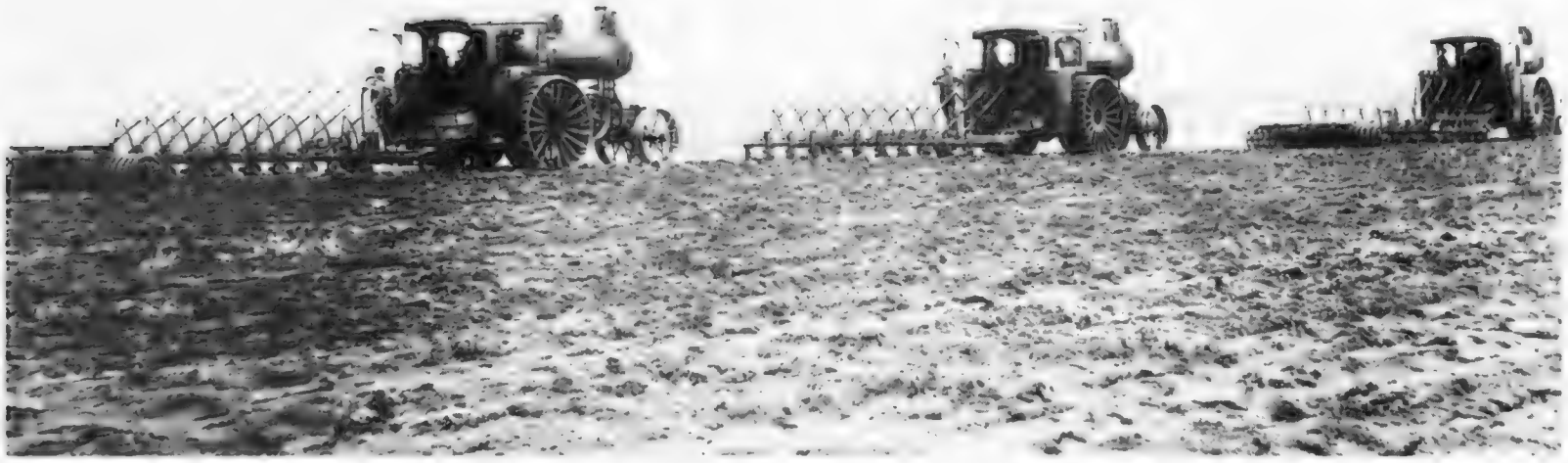
This sonorous bell, installed at Buena Vista by Colonel Haraszthy, still tolls the passing years.

STEAM TRACTORS

Monsters That Changed the West

By Art Fee

EXCEPT WHERE NOTED, PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF THE GLENBOW MUSEUM, CALGARY



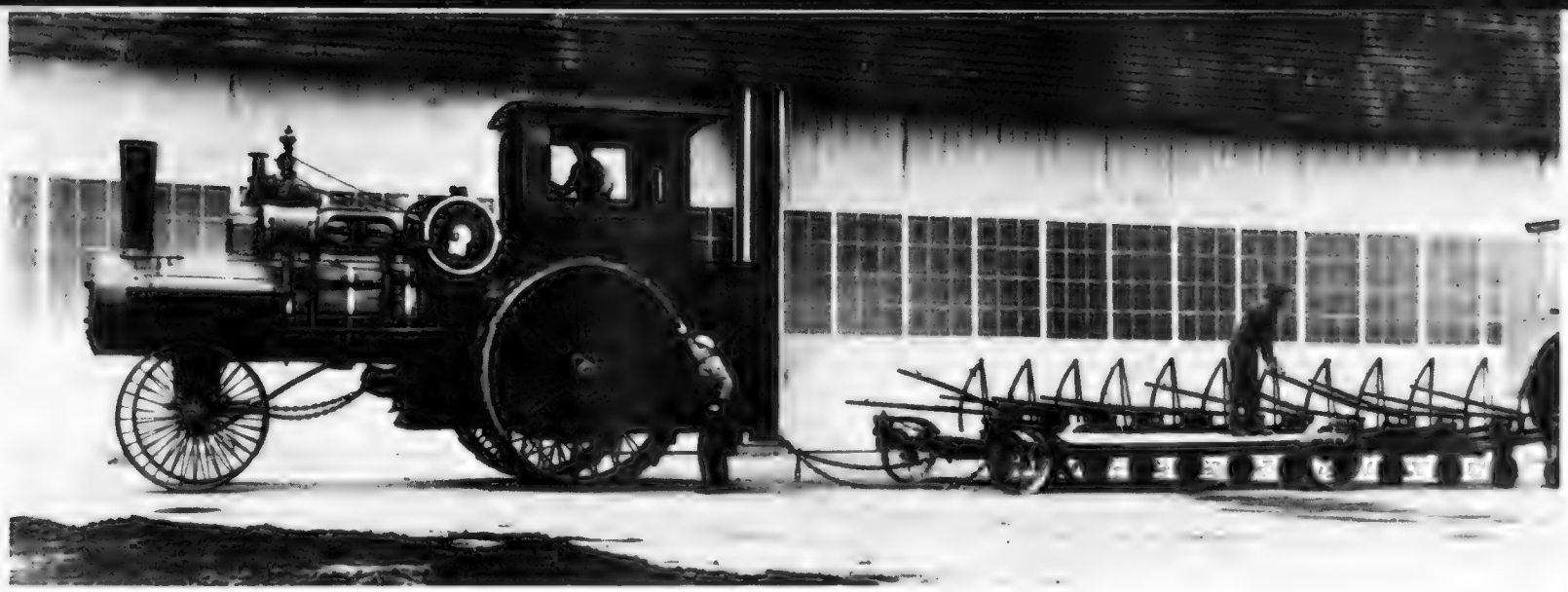
Soon after the last Indians had settled on reservations and homesteaders had moved in to take up all the free land, huge steam tractors began to make their appearance on the Great Plains of the United States and Canada. For nearly half a century thereafter these noisy, fire-belching monsters ruled the harvest fields, their massive driving wheels biting deep into the earth and their plows breaking the sod as they swept across the prairies. Nearly everywhere they went, rich crops grew, prosperity followed, railroads were laid down, tall grain elevators were built, and towns sprang up.

They were powerful, heavy, and slow-moving. The bigger ones weighed between twenty and thirty tons each and could pull more than twenty plows through the virgin sod. They were manufactured from 1865 until 1930, but the years of their greatest popularity were between 1890 and 1925. In 1910 there were as many different sizes, makes, and models of steamers as there are of cars and trucks today.

In their day they cost about a dime a pound. Many a farmer lost everything he had trying to pay for one of these giants. Those who made money with them were men who could handle big crews and run and repair their own machines efficiently—and who had the good fortune to grow a string of bumper crops.

Not all of these tractors were found on the rolling prairies. Others hauled ore out of Death Valley, snaked logs from Northwest forests and sawed them into lumber, graded thousands of miles of roads, pulled freight across Canada's frozen rivers, and carted gold seekers and equipment up the Caribou Trail. One quality that made these adaptable machines so popular was that, like horses and mules, they could be run off the country: wood or straw for fuel; water for the boilers; and (in an emergency) melted beef tallow for cylinder oil and grease.

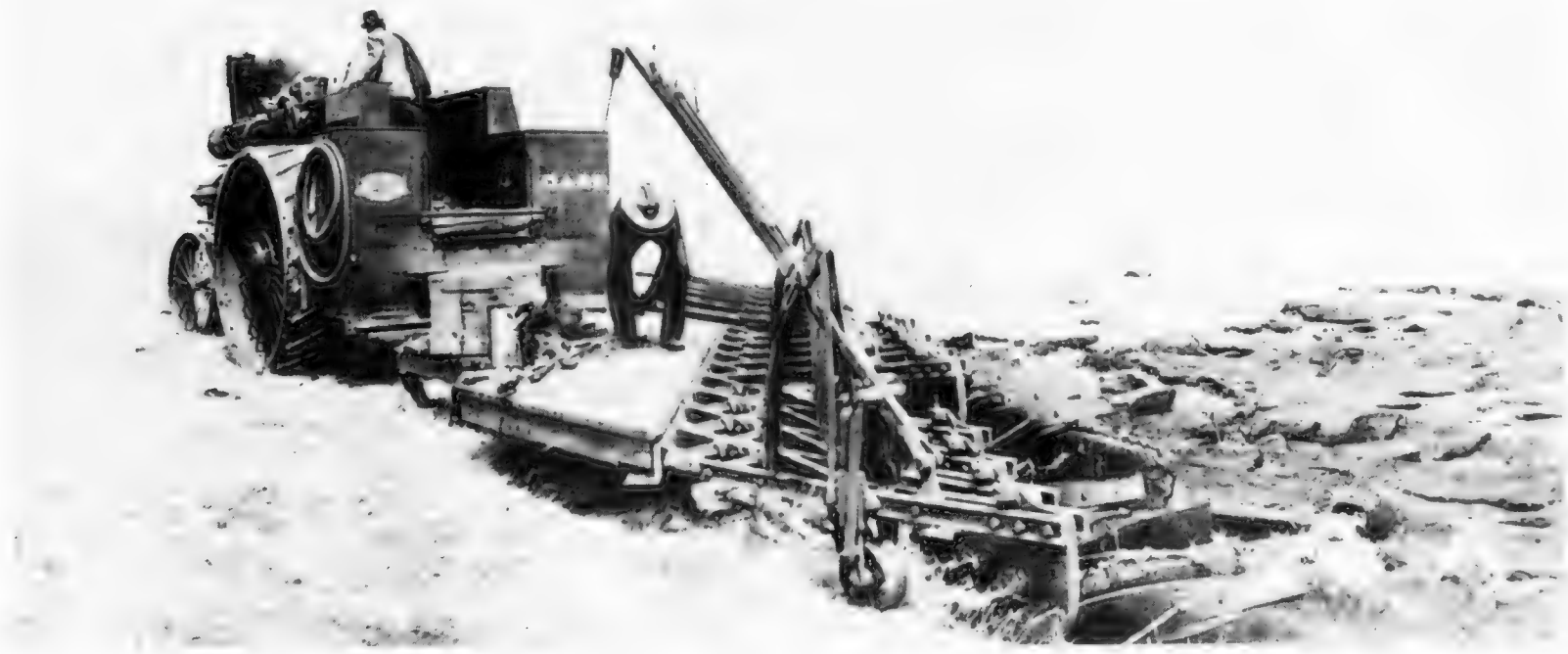
Now nearly all of them have disappeared. A few survive in collections, lovingly restored to working order by enthusiasts—to recall an era when steam tractors changed the West.



The 110 Case. This was one of the most popular of the large steam tractors and had a number of refinements, including power steering, carbide lights, a cab complete with tool boxes and padded seats, and curtains to keep out the weather. This model could be fired with wood, coal, or straw, and a few even burned oil.

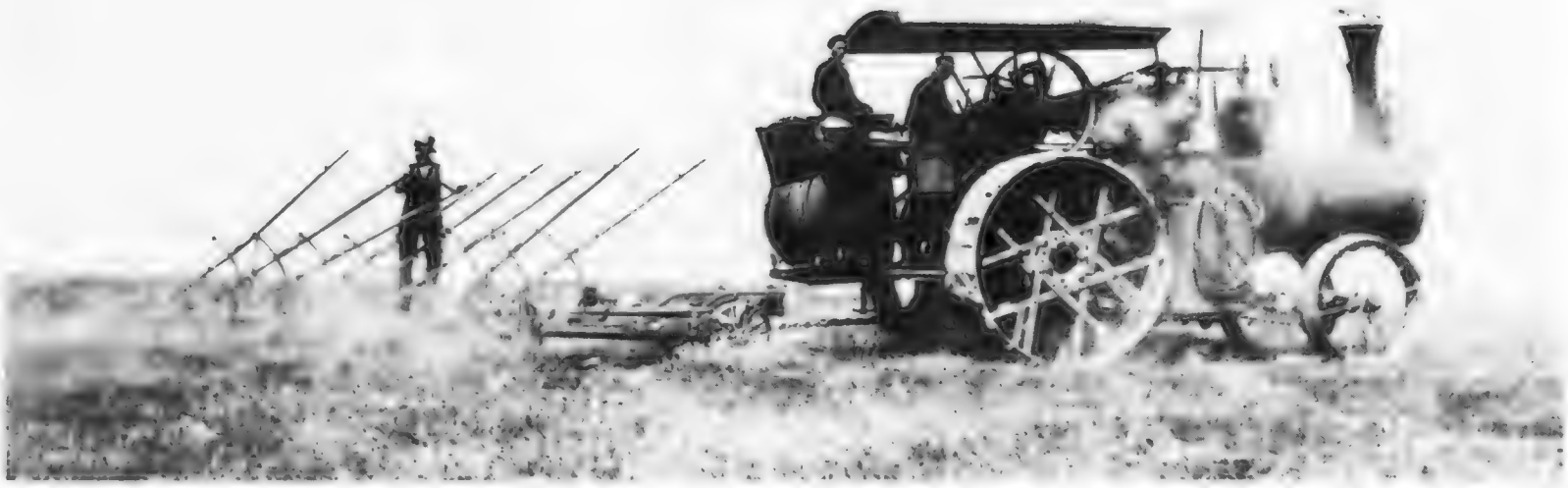
The locomotive boiler on the 110 Case carried steam at a pressure of 165 pounds per square inch, and the piston of the simple one-cylinder engine was twelve inches in diameter and had a twelve-inch stroke. The four-hundred-gallon tank for feed water was mounted between and behind the big drive wheels and under the operators' platform, thus giving the engineer an unobstructed view of the plows and (when threshing) of the grain separator. On top of the tank were two coal tenders that carried a ton of soft coal.

The 110 in the name meant that the tractor was rated at 110 horsepower on the drive belt; on the drawbar it was rated at 32 horsepower. Pulling at maximum load, it traveled two miles an hour, and its top speed was a little over three. Fully loaded, the machine weighed forty-two thousand pounds, and it cost forty-two hundred dollars at a time when the average farm worker was earning a dollar a day.



An early model of the 110 Case, without a cab, pulling ten plows to break up the prairie sod. It has come to the end of the field, and the fireman is levering the plows out of the ground. These are probably sixteen-inch plows (plows that each turn over a furrow sixteen inches wide). A sixteen-inch, ten-bottom plow covered a strip 160 inches wide, while a fourteen-inch, twelve-bottom plow blackened a 168-inch strip. It took about as much power to pull one as the other. The sixteen-inch plow did a much better job of breaking ground where there was long grass, buckbrush, or small sagebrush. As a general rule farmers plowed six inches deep when breaking sod. Plowing virgin sod took about twice as much power as plowing stubble (previously cultivated land).

Steam tractors were much more powerful than their drawbar horsepower ratings would indicate. To pull a plow this size in prairie sod would require at least forty-eight draft horses. In 1924 on the Dwight Misner ranch at Jane, Oregon, a team of thirty horses was used to pull a nine-bottom plow in stubble. The 110 Case steam tractor was capable of pulling twenty plows on the same ground.



A 32 Reeves pulling eight breaking plows. The Reeves (rated at thirty-two horsepower on the drawbar) was an excellent plowing machine and carried more water in its tank than the big Case, but because the fireman could not easily step down to lift the plows in and out of the ground at the ends of the field, a third man was usually required to ride behind. Two other men were always needed to run a steam tractor outfit: a tankman to haul water out to the field, and the boss—or perhaps a flunky—to haul fuel. Steam engines could be extremely dangerous if mishandled, and government regulations regarding their use were strict. To become an engineer a man had to serve as fireman for three years and then pass a written test.

A rear view of a 32 Reeves plowing engine and its crew: the engineer, fireman, tankman, and the man who handled the plow levers. The last-mentioned crewman was usually also the one who stayed up nights to sharpen the plow shears. An outfit this size would use at least thirty-six resharpened plow shears every day, and more if the ground was dry and stony. The shears directly behind the drive wheels had to be changed twice as often as the others. On a good day the crew could break sixty acres of sod; to accomplish this, the engine would burn about three tons of coal.

The Big 40 Garr Scott, one of the most powerful steam tractors made in America. This monster had double tandem compound engines, weighed close to fifty thousand pounds, and cost five thousand dollars. In the Garr Scott catalog for 1909, J. H. Watt of Carswell, Texas, was pictured with a Big 40 and a twenty-eight-blade disk plow, with which he claimed to have broken 128 acres of sod in a single day.

Together, the tank on the back and the two on the sides of the Big 40 Garr Scott carried over a thousand gallons of water. Large steam tractors, however, used as much as five thousand gallons a day and often required two men with five-hundred-gallon tank wagons to keep them going. (Note the tank wagon in the photograph.)

The drivers (drive wheels) on most big steamers averaged eighty-four inches in diameter and varied from thirty to forty inches in width. They weighed over two tons apiece. To provide greater traction for plowing, extension rims were usually added, increasing each wheel's width to as much as six feet and nearly doubling its weight.

The Garr Scott, Reeves, Rumley, and Avery companies all made Big 40s. The question most asked among steam fans today is, which would outpull the other: a Big 40 or a modern D9 Caterpillar (the largest single engine caterpillar made)? A steamer's problem was not generating power, but rather keeping its footing. With extension rims and both drivers locked, a steamer in good shape and with a full head of steam could spin its wheels in the hardest sod. The experiment with the Caterpillar has never been tried, but the following contest may provide some idea of the pulling power of the old steam tractors. In 1964 at Woodland, Washington, Paul Schurman hooked his old 13 Garr Scott (rated at thirteen horsepower on the drawbar) up to a new Ford Major diesel tractor rated at thirty-four horsepower on the drawbar. On hard pavement the fifty-five-year-old steamer pulled the new Ford back with ease. Then they took the tractors out on the sod. The Garr Scott pulled the Ford back till it dug down almost to the axle. At this point the two tractors stopped moving, but the wheels of both were still turning in the forward direction.

A 30 Avery undermount pulling ten plows and a land packer. The designation meant that the engine was rated at thirty horsepower on the drawbar and that it was mounted under the boiler instead of on top where most others were. This model had a double simple engine, the same as in most railway locomotives. There were five different kinds of engines built for steamers on this continent: the single simple (one cylinder), which was the most common; the double simple, with two simple engines side by side; the tandem compound, which had a large and a small piston on the same drive shaft; the double tandem compound, with two tandem compounds side by side; and the cross compound, which resembled a double simple except that one cylinder was twice as large as the other. This last type was the most powerful of all, as live steam could be let into the big low-pressure cylinder in an emergency, more than doubling the horsepower. Compound engines were more economical than simple engines but also gave more trouble.

All steam tractors had one thing in common: their engines turned very slowly in comparison to our modern ones—at a rate of from two hundred to three hundred revolutions per minute. As a result, engines suffered very little wear; many steamers have given over fifty years of continuous service.

A large steam tractor pulling four two-bottom horse-drawn plows. Steam operators were "make-do" artists and developed many different plow hookups. As soon as the breaking was done, these smaller plows could be individually pulled by five- or six-horse teams to finish the job. A big ten- or twelve-bottom plow—costing from eight hundred to a thousand dollars—was not always a good investment because steam tractors were seldom used for plowing cultivated land. The main reason they did not prove satisfactory for working such ground was that the tractor gears were all out in the open and were not made of case-hardened steel. Soil and sand that was kicked up when the tractor was driven over fresh-plowed soil mixed with the oil on the gears to act like a grinding compound, and this could ruin the slides and gears in a short time.

In wheat country, threshing time was the big event of the year. The grain was cut with binders and tied in bundles; the bundles were then set up in the field in shocks ("stooks" in Canada) until the grain hardened and the straw was dry enough to thresh. Then the engineer hooked his big steam tractor to the grain separator, secured the cook wagon behind, and with the rest of the crew following, started for the grainfields.

During this season extra help was needed, and the railroads usually brought special excursion trains of workers into the area. A large steam threshing outfit like that photographed above—on a wheat farm in Manitoba in 1906—required twelve to fifteen men with wagons to haul in the bundles, two to four field pitchers to help load the wagons, and two more to feed the grain into the separator. A large plowing tractor like the one shown easily ran the largest separator. To operate this machinery, there was an engineer, a fireman, a tank man to haul water for the boiler, a flunky to keep the fireman supplied with coal or straw fuel, and a separator man. There was also a cook and her helper.

A big steam threshing outfit in action was a thrilling scene to behold: the monster steamer gently rocking and throwing a plume of gray smoke and white steam skyward; three or four bundle wagons crowded around the separator with men throwing in the sheaves; the high bagger dumping golden grain into bins; and a continuous stream of yellow straw flowing from the howling blower onto a pile that rose like a small mountain on the level plain.

Supreme in the eyes of all was the engineer, who moved his ponderous machines from field to field in a cloud of steam and smoke. When the engineer relocated the machinery, he considered it a matter of pride to drive the tractor smartly into line with the separator, put on the big drive belt, and have the machinery going again in near-record time.

The separator man often looked like a chimney sweep, but he was the boss of the threshing crew and usually the owner of the outfit. Standing on top of his machine with oil can in hand, he kept a watchful eye on the men pitching in the bundles—and woe unto one who fed the machine improperly.

The first man up each morning was the fireman. At four o'clock he would tramp his way out to the engine to light the fires and get up a head of steam. At five whistles began blowing in the eerie darkness; this was the call to breakfast. Promptly at six the engineer opened his throttle, and the bundles began rolling into the hungry separator. At eleven the crew paused for dinner, and again at four for lunch. The day's work ended at six or after, with supper at seven. On a good day a big outfit could thresh 4,500 bushels of wheat or 14,000 bushels of oats. The aim of every thresherman was to make enough before noon to pay his operating expenses; what he made in the afternoon went to pay for the outfit.

AUTHOR'S COLLECTION

The famous Best steam tractor. This tractor had an upright boiler, a type that could work successfully in hilly country where locomotive and return-flue boilers could not. (When a tractor with a horizontal boiler went down a steep hill, the water would run off the crown sheet above the fire box, and the lead safety plug would melt and put out the fire.)

The Best Company made some tractors with drive wheels twenty-one feet wide for working in the California rice fields. The company's tractors ranged in size from 30 to 110 belt-horsepower, and its promoters claimed that the 110-horsepower model could do the work of seventy-five mules and could be operated for the cost of the grain they ate.

The world's second-largest plowing outfit. This photograph was taken at Purdue University in 1911, when the Oliver Plow Company put this huge fifty-bottom gang together. It was pulled by three 30-60 Rumley oil-pull tractors. But a competitor, the International Harvester Company, was not to be outdone. It assembled a fifty-five bottom plow and pulled it with three big 45-90 Moguls, thus creating what was undoubtedly the largest working plow in history.

SASKATOON GOVERNMENT PHOTOGRAPH

AUTHOR'S COLLECTION

A recent photograph of tractors on parade at a "steam-up." During the late 1940s several older men in different parts of the United States and Canada realized that scenes like the ones on these pages were gone forever and that their last chances for finding any of the old tractors and threshers were fast fading away. They set out in earnest, searching for the few that might still be around. But they had waited almost too long, and most of the bigger tractors were already gone—cut up for scrap.

Nevertheless, a few fine collections were assembled. Walter Mehmke (left), known as "Mr. Steam Engine, U.S.A.," has the largest private collection of working steam tractors in the United States. He has also held a steam engineer's license longer than anyone else in the country. Each fall since 1953, at his steam museum near Great Falls, Montana, Mehmke has held a threshing bee that has attracted much interest.

The world's largest collection of reconditioned steam tractors is at the Pioneer Era Museum at Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, and includes more than one hundred different models in working order, plus many old gasoline tractors, grain separators, and other early farm implements. At "steam-ups" held each summer at Saskatoon and elsewhere, enthusiasts fire up the old boilers to re-create the flavor of days gone by. Ground is plowed, grain threshed, lumber sawed, and wagons towed. The young see how things were done, and the old-timers reminisce.

Art Fee *is a steam enthusiast who resides at Ridgefield, Washington. He has owned and operated several steam tractors.*

CHRISTY ROMO, COURTESY OF EASTWOOD HIGH SCHOOL

COLLECTOR'S CHOICE

"Eastwood Troopers" of Eastwood High School, El Paso, pose with their venerable trophy.

The Blue Whistler

Saga of a Cannon That Fought in Two Wars and Under Three Flags

By Martin Cole

NEARLY ALL OF EL PASO WAS ASLEEP that pre-dawn morning in 1911, when a touring car was cautiously backed up to an old Civil War cannon that had long been a familiar landmark at the city hall plaza. The cannon's tailpiece was hurriedly tied to the car's bumper, there was a muffled "Let's go," and the "Blue Whistler" of Civil War fame was whisked off to fight another battle—in a war across the border in Mexico.

Before it was spirited away, the cannon—a 12-pounder field howitzer—was already celebrated in legend, fact, and supposition. Perhaps this sojourn into Mexico to fight with Madero's army would be the denouement of its long and strange career.

The chronicle of the Blue Whistler began in 1846 at the N. P. Ames foundry in Springfield, Massachusetts. The firm, under contract to the U.S. Army, cast in brass a series of barrels fifty-three inches long and of standard configuration. Something about No. 39, perhaps a slight imperfection within the 4½-inch bore, caused a distinctive whistle at the moment of discharge as the projectile hurtled through the air.

That the whistling cannon would be amusing to the artillery-

men who fired her was a foregone conclusion; it was also predictable that she should acquire a pet name. She became known as the Blue Whistler, and as the Blue Whistler she did garrison duty with the Department of New Mexico, until fate overtook her at Fort Craig.

At the outbreak of the Civil War, Jefferson Davis gave immediate attention to the vast western territories and California. There was little doubt in the Confederate president's mind that if the few feeble Union forts on the Rio Grande were subdued, the Confederacy could extend its domain to the Pacific Coast. President Lincoln too was aware of the precarious situation and included a defense of the West in his war plans; and just in time, for the South had hastily gathered a force of 2,300 men under Gen. H. H. Sibley at El Paso. In February 1862 this army, made up mostly of Texans, marched northward into New Mexico and shortly after was met by Gen. E. R. S. Canby's army at Valverde in the vicinity of Fort Craig.

The battle began on the morning of February 21 and continued throughout the day. Sibley had carefully picked a site on the east side of the Rio Grande where deep ravines and exposed lava beds offered a favorable defense.

For a time the two forces engaged in an artillery duel from opposite sides of the Rio Grande. And the peculiar whistle of one cannon, while it probably went unnoticed in the heat of battle, might have been heard by anyone listening. Union Capt. Alexander McRae and his light battery of 12-pounders, from an exposed position on the west bank, soon succeeded in dislodging a Confederate battery four hundred yards away on the east bank. McRae and his battery managed to cross the river, and then with Lieutenant Hall and his two 24-pounders, attempted without success to dislodge a Texas regiment.

In midafternoon the Confederates began to move into an upstream position, and when Canby was alerted to this flanking maneuver, he ordered McRae's battery, together with the New Mexico Volunteers under Col. Kit Carson, to a forward position. Too late it was discovered they had moved almost on top of an enemy battery hidden in an old river bed only a hundred yards away. The Texan artillery immediately swept the Federal troops with a round of canister, and the Texas infantry unit, with a sustained rebel yell, came charging over the river bank. The ill-trained New Mexico Volunteers, facing fire and bayonet for the first time, panicked and fled, leaving McRae's battery to its fate. But McRae's men, firing a double-shotted volley, succeeded in repulsing the charge. Twice more the Texans charged and finally reached the cannon, only to be met by courageous artillerymen in hand-to-hand fighting. Once more the Texans were driven off. The fourth rush ended again in close-in fighting, even more desperate than before. Captain McRae was slain on the barrel of the Blue Whistler, and while his blood was still running out, Major Lockridge of the attacking force likewise fell dead across the gun. By now perhaps a hundred dead lay piled around the battery. At this moment Union cavalry came to the rescue and enabled McRae's survivors to extract themselves, sans guns.

The capture of McRae's battery, which had comprised one fourth of the artillery in Canby's command, was a significant victory for the South. Sibley's main objective, however, was to capture the Fort Union Ordnance Depot and to resupply his troops with the military stores there. This objective was thwarted by the timely arrival of the Colorado Volunteers marching down from Denver. The Federals, now strengthened, moved south and engaged Sibley in two days of fierce fighting at Glorieta Pass and Apache Canyon. Sibley's supply train was destroyed, his command became utterly disorganized, and its demoralized remnants straggled southward toward the sanctuary of El Paso. This disastrous rout ended the Civil War in the West.

When the Blue Whistler and companion cannon involuntarily changed flags, they came under the command of Capt. Trevanion Teel, who promptly took them on the northward campaign. One of the cannon had a distinguishing mark: a stain some six inches forward of the touch-hole—the blood of the fallen officers, which had fused with the hot barrel.

When the hard-pressed Teel reached Albuquerque after the defeat at Glorieta and Apache Canyon, he was faced with no choice but to abandon the weapons. He decided not to let them fall into Union hands; instead, he would bury the cannon barrels. Accordingly, on a cold March night, he and a detachment of men dug a shallow trench in a corral. Four of the 12-pounders, including the Blue Whistler, were wrapped in a tarpaulin and covered with dirt, which was trampled by hoofs to obliterate the signs of digging. Four other cannon were buried nearby at San Marscheell.

EL PASO PUBLIC LIBRARY

An old photograph of the McGinty Club band, flanked by its two cannon, "Little Tom" and the "Blue Whistler."

EL PASO PUBLIC LIBRARY

Pancho Villa and his* insurrectos *depart Ojinaga, Chihuahua, after capturing it with the aid of the "Blue Whistler."

TIME PASSED AND THE SHAMEFUL WAR ENDED. Those who survived began building a new America. While the memory of conflict remained indelible for most veterans, few deliberately recalled it to mind. It was not until August of 1889 that Teel not only had occasion to look back nearly thirty years, but also to set in motion the recovery of the buried cannon.

It was a long train ride from Kansas City to El Paso for Trevanion Teel, now a successful lawyer returning home from a business trip. On the same train was Charles Crawford, the "poet scout" of Union Army fame. To pass the time, the two veterans began reminiscing about the war, and the incident of the buried cannon was recalled.

The upshot of the conversation was that the two men later met in Albuquerque and asked and received permission from the city officials to dig up and claim the cannon. Teel discovered the corral no longer existed and the character of the land had changed considerably. But certain landmarks still offered clues to the location. "Dig here," he told a helper. The earth was quickly turned but no cannon were found. "All right, now try here," said Teel, indicating a place six feet away.

Here the shovels struck metal, and moments later the cannon were lifted to the surface. Crawford had expressed a desire to have one cannon presented to St. Joseph, Missouri, his hometown, and this request was granted. Denver received a cannon as a memorial to the Colorado Volunteers whose timely presence saved the West for the Union. Albuquerque accepted the gift of another.

Regarding No. 39, Teel stated, "I am going to keep this cannon. The Federal soldiers called it the 'Blue Whistler,' because of a peculiar sound it made when discharged, and the Confederates adopted the name."

Newspaper stories about Teel's find prompted the McGinty Club of El Paso to wire the Major. Would he make the Blue Whistler available to the club?

The main purpose of the McGinty Club was musical. Aside from the band there were a dozen sub-groups—quartets, choir, fife-and-drum corps, tipica orchestra, string orchestra, banjo troubadors, and even a Chinese group which played "weirdly charming" airs on native instruments. The McGintys gave concerts at the Plaza; played for funerals and weddings; and had welcomed important visitors, including two presidents, Harrison and McKinley. The Blue Whistler, if presented, would be a companion piece to the 6-pounder mountain howitzer owned by the McGinty Club. Two cannon instead of one would add emphasis to celebrations and especially the mock battles held on the Fourth of July. Yes, replied Teel, and in due time the Blue Whistler, remounted on a carriage, was presented with appropriate ceremony.

SHORTLY AFTER THE TURN OF THE CENTURY it was obvious that "the good old days" of the McGinty Club were nearing an end. In 1901 the band made its last full-dress appearance, and in 1905 the McGinty Club and howitzers were absorbed by the El Paso Pioneer Association. The Blue Whistler, often referred to in contemporary news items as the "McGinty cannon" or "Long Tom" (as opposed to the club's 6-pounder mountain howitzer, "Little Tom") was given a new home at the city hall plaza. Here it remained, an object of passing interest, until March 17, 1911, when during the dark of night it mysteriously vanished.

"General belief is that *insurrectos* have El Paso's historic cannon," declared *The El Paso Herald* the following day. It was an accurate surmise. The Blue Whistler had been appropriated to aid Francisco Madero's forces in their attempt to dislodge President Porfirio Diaz's government troops at Ciudad Juarez.

The not-so-neutral United States was unofficially permitting overt aid to the Madero revolution by American sympathizers in El Paso, Douglas, and other border towns. In El Paso, Dr. Ira J. Bush was the prime mover of American-Mexican intrigue. Some time previously he had entertained Governor Abraham Gonzales of Chihuahua. On passing the city hall plaza, the governor had remarked, "We could use that gun if we had it in Mexico."

When Gonzales later gave the Madero revolution his blessing, Bush recalled the chance remark. With the help of Mrs. Monroe Harper, former wife of Major Teel, and her son Albert Hatcher, he "liberated" the old howitzer. For a few days the Blue Whistler was hidden in the barn of Mrs. Harris, sister of Mrs. Harper. When black powder needed for the howitzer arrived from Denver, the cannon was taken apart and loaded onto the bed of a wagon, over which was placed hay and the household effects of a poor Mexican family. Completing the guise was the Molina family. They were

stopped several times by militiamen patrolling the river road, but the perfunctory searches failed to reveal the hidden cannon. After successfully smuggling the Blue Whistler across the Rio Grande, Molina wired Dr. Bush, "The baby has arrived."

Madero's ragtag army was made up mainly of Pancho Villa's *insurrectos* and the *soldaderas* of Gen. Pascual Orozco. While Madero's forces numbered some three thousand, only two cannon supported the ranks. Aside from the Blue Whistler, Villa had an ancient Krupp field piece. The total artillery was entrusted to Lou Carpentier, a Frenchman whom a reporter described as "a dainty little chap who wore a pair of new kid gloves."

Before the revolutionary army closed in on Ciudad Juarez, it first had to reduce Ojinaga and Camargo. This was accomplished with relative little effort after the Blue Whistler and Villa's Krupp pulverized the defensive adobe walls. Ciudad Juarez was more formidable, however. The garrison, commanded by Gen. Juan Navarro, was strongly fortified and armed with French machine guns. Thousands of El Pasoans, at the risk of being hit by stray bullets, witnessed the battle. Five of them were killed. Newsman Timothy Turner described the scene: "They [the rebels] moved in no formation whatsoever, just an irregular stream of them, silhouettes of men and rifles. . . . They would fight awhile and then come back to rest, sleep and eat, returning refreshed to the front."

Regarding the two-cannon bombardment, Turner wrote, "A shot struck the Federal's water tank in their barracks, a lucky hit which destroyed most of the defenders' water supply and which had much to do with the fall of the town." Did the Blue Whistler fire the decisive round? Perhaps—at least it's a fifty-fifty assumption.

WHEN THE SMOKE OF WAR CLEARED AWAY, Diaz was dethroned, and the peace of Mexico was assured for the time being. The Blue Whistler came back to El Paso with all the honors of a conquering hero. On the afternoon of August 18, 1911, the veteran field piece, adorned with both Mexican and American flags and pulled by two pairs of mules, approached the international bridge by way of Aveneda Juarez. Accompanying the howitzer were two companies of soldiers, complete with bugles and drums, led by General Orozco and staff. At the bridge the contingent halted before Mayor C. E. Kelly and dignitaries of El Paso. As townspeople of both nations looked on, General Orozco's secretary, speaking in English, gave a glowing tribute to the part played by the Blue Whistler. The soldiers presented arms, and the formal presentation was made.

An automobile replaced the pulling power of mules; the motorcar procession passed down El Paso Street, swung into San Antonio Street, and up to the city hall plaza. Here Dr. Bush, standing on the howitzer carriage, made a welcoming speech. The Blue Whistler was home again.

EL PASO PUBLIC LIBRARY

Jubilant crowds escort the "Blue Whistler" back across the border following the Mexican Revolution.

Again time passed, and then in about 1936 someone promoted the idea that the Blue Whistler should be displayed at the museum of the Texas College of Mines (now University of Texas at El Paso). Unfortunately, after the howitzer was located there, it was the object of a student prank. It was stolen, hitched to a car, and given a wild ride through the streets of El Paso, resulting in the breaking-up of the carriage. The barrel was then relegated to basement storage, where it remained until 1961. At that time it was presented to the new Eastwood High School opening on McRae Boulevard. (Yes—the boulevard is named after the Captain McRae killed on the barrel of the Blue Whistler.)

The students, aware of McRae's dramatic death, adopted a Civil War motif for their band and called themselves the "Eastwood Troopers." Thus it was only fitting and meaningful to build student *elan* around the Blue Whistler. Student money-making activities raised $1,500 to have the howitzer fully restored with an authentic carriage at the Department of Correction, Lortori, Virginia.

Today the venerable old field piece remains on display at Eastwood High, an object of affection by the students. No longer are the bloodstains visible; you are told the buffing during restoration eliminated the coloration. Among historians and cannon buffs, there are some disagreements regarding details of the cannon's Civil War history. But there is no doubt that the Blue Whistler's colorful past is like something from a storybook—one that leads off with ". . . thereby hangs a tale."

Martin Cole *is a free-lance writer and retired historian–curator for the State of California.*

THE GREAT ARABIAN AND AMERICAN DESERTS

Significant Parallels—and Notable Differences—in the Geography, Climate, and History of Two Regions Half a World Apart

By Lawrence R. Murphy

UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD COMPANY

Monotonous flatlands extending to the horizon—and even beyond: Union Pacific construction on the transcontinental railroad in 1866.

THE COUNTRYSIDE CLOSELY RESEMBLED many arid portions of western America. Flat, treeless plains stretched for miles, just as they do in Kansas, Wyoming, or west Texas. Not far away were steep cliffs, shaped by countless eons of erosion, that could just as well have been situated in the canyonlands country of Utah or Arizona. Occasionally a traveler encountered areas so dry and desolate that only the hardiest animals and plants were able to survive. Nevada or southeastern California perhaps? Anyone versed in frontier history might have been reminded of Maj. Stephen H. Long's description of the "Great American Desert": an area "unfit for cultivation and of course uninhabitable by a people depending upon agriculture for their subsistence." The definition seemed equally appropriate here.

And the people of this land bore a distinct similarity to the Indians of the trans-Mississippi frontier. They were nomadic in life-style, for survival depended upon constant migration in search of food and water. Their houses were made from animal skins and could easily be collapsed and transported from one place to another. Because rapid movement was important, becoming an expert rider was the principal task of every youth. Bravery, steadfastness, and ingenuity were natural characteristics among these people.

But a keen observer would immediately note differences sufficient to prove that he was not in the Old American West. Only a few isolated areas beyond the Mississippi contain sand dunes, yet here the shifting hills of sand were common and extensive. Clusters of palm trees at water holes looked distinctively un-American. And rather than racing across the desert on horses like the Navajos, Apaches, Comanches, or Kiowas, these people rode camels—too many to be escapees from the United States Army's ill-fated Camel Corps.

RICK VIDAL, ARAMCO WORLD, BEIRUT

Railroad builders on the arid Arabian Peninsula faced terrain not unlike that of much of the American West; this is the old Hijaz line north of Medina.

Despite these differences, historians trained according to the precepts of such frontier theorists as Frederick Jackson Turner and Walter Prescott Webb might be tempted to forecast the progression of history for such a geographical setting. Almost certainly, they might speculate, the sedentary residents of a more fertile and "civilized" area, equipped with the tools of an advanced society, would eventually invade and conquer such a disadvantaged territory. Like the Indians of North America, the natives would suffer gradual but inevitable defeat. Those who survived would be confined to reservations or relegated to a second-class status. Their culture would soon be almost obliterated. In short, the history of the United States would repeat itself.

Though it bears an almost uncanny similarity to the arid West, the area just described is in reality the vast, dry Arabian Peninsula located nearly halfway around the world from America, between the continents of Africa and Asia. The geographical resemblance between the two areas is so close that variations in their histories serve to cast doubt on some accepted theories of frontier development. A brief look at the Arabian experience may prove useful to historians seeking more comprehensive explanations for frontier phenomena.

ENCOMPASSING MORE THAN one million square miles, Arabia constitutes the world's largest peninsula. The Red Sea borders it on the west, the Persian Gulf on the east, and the Indian Ocean on the south. To the north lies the Fertile Crescent centering on the Tigris-Euphrates Valley of modern Iraq. Although some portions of Arabia are so desolate and forbidding that no European visited or mapped them until the twentieth century, others are fertile enough to allow the graz-

LANEHART & LANDROCK, CAIRO

For these Bedouins and their camels on the Arabian desert, survival means constant migration in search of food and water.

ing of livestock. In a few scattered places, chiefly along the coasts where rainfall is relatively plentiful, crops can be grown.

The dominant characteristic of the region, as in much of the American West, is aridity. In most areas the annual rainfall averages only two to five inches. Even in the better watered places, droughts of two or three years' duration occur frequently. And the rivers of Arabia—like many of their counterparts in the southwestern United States—are usually just dry beds. Phillip Hitti, one of the best-known historians of Arabia, has described the region as "a harsh and forbidding land, the air dry and the soil salty. There is not a single river of significance which flows perennially and reaches the sea."

While historians of frontier America commonly study events which occurred a hundred years ago or less, historians of Arabia may study events that occurred thousands of years ago. Stone inscriptions dating more than eight hundred years before the time of Christ document the development, during this and later centuries, of a complex and highly structured Arabian culture. Trade routes linked Africa and India with the Mediterranean Sea. Each year caravans with hundreds of camels carrying luxury goods trekked across the deserts. Permanent encampments grew up at important intersections or at reliable sources of water.

Out of these developments emerged the distinctive Arab Bedouin. Oriental historians have described his culture as "the best adaptation of human life to desert conditions," a characterization that others have frequently reserved for various Indian groups in the western United States. Like his North American cousin, the Bedouin arranged his life around seasonal climatic changes. During the four hottest months of the year, he stayed close to wells, barely enduring the intense heat and blowing sand. With the first rain, however, he migrated to pasture lands and for the next seven or eight months followed the sparse and short-lasting grasses from one area to another. When grazing land was no longer available he returned to the wells. The camel was as important to him as the buffalo was to the nomads of America's Great Plains, providing food, clothing, transportation, housing, and fuel. Fierce competition for grazing rights, control of water sources, and ownership of camels led to almost constant fighting between the various tribes.

Then, as western civilization spread across Europe, the same weaknesses which apparently brought the Indians of the American frontier down to defeat centuries later also imperiled the Arab Bedouins. Intertribal animosities made it impossible to present a unified force against foreign enemies. Robbery and pillage increased until they threatened the profitability of

JOSEF MUENCH

Like their Arab counterparts, these Navajo sheepherders in Monument Valley, Arizona, lead a nomadic existence in a harsh environment.

the formerly lucrative caravan trade. More and more Bedouins settled in trading communities where they found their nomadic value system increasingly meaningless, and many fell into a deep psychological malaise. At the same time, armies from neighboring Christianized lands threatened to overrun the peninsula. It appeared that the fate of Arabia was sealed.

Suddenly, early in the seventh century of the Christian era, this historical progression dramatically changed direction. In the trading community of Mecca, a middle-aged man named Mohammed claimed to have received a series of inspirational messages from God. In them God named Mohammed as his prophet, prescribed a new code of personal behavior, and promised to guide and protect anyone who submitted to His will. At first opposition to the Prophet Mohammed and his message was intense, and he was forced to flee to the nearby town of Medina. In time, however, conversions increased, and before long many Arabs had accepted the religion of Islam.

The success of Mohammed and his divinely inspired message radically transformed the nomadic Bedouins of the Arabian Peninsula. A new meaning to life and a steadfast purpose replaced their previous malaise and aimlessness. Each individual believer now had a divine mission. Formerly antagonistic tribes united under the banner of Islam, and disputes, arbitrated by Mohammed and his successors, ceased to result in war. A conviction of strength backed by God's protection permeated society. Self-confidence was restored. And rather than await conquest by some technologically superior foreign power, the Arabs now set out to spread their religious beliefs in all directions, by force of arms if necessary. The opportunity to accumulate booty provided further incentive. Soon vast armies left the harsh deserts of the peninsula to capture surrounding territory.

The speed with which Islamic civilization spread has seldom been equaled in the history of mankind. One after another, older, more sedentary, and supposedly more highly civilized empires fell to the nomadic Bedouins. Marching westward, the nomads conquered the fertile Nile Valley of Egypt and continued along the southern Mediterranean through present-day Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco. Moslems crossed the Strait of Gibraltar and conquered Spain. In the north the prophet's troops won victories in Syria and Mesopotamia before pushing on toward the Turkish highlands and into Persia. In the east they moved far into the Indian sub-continent. Sailors and merchants carried the new religion into the Indian and Pacific oceans; other missionaries found their way into the interior of Africa.

Thus the people of an arid, remote, barely inhabitable area not unlike the western United States came to dominate a vast

portion of the civilized world. Arabic, the sacred tongue of Islam, came to be spoken by millions of believers. The holy Koran, ritual prayers, and minareted mosques originated in Arabia could be found thousands of miles from the peninsula itself. The cultural values of a nomadic people gained supremacy among sedentary believers. Mecca and Medina, the remote, isolated towns where Mohammed had spent his life, became holy places. Each year thousands who had accepted God and his prophet went on pilgrimage to them.

THE UNIQUE CHARACTER of these Islamic conquests may be better understood by imagining a similar series of events in western America. Suppose that sometime after the arrival of the first Europeans on the Atlantic coast, an obscure Indian in a remote village somewhere beyond the Appalachians received a vision similar to that of Mohammed. After a period of initial skepticism and antagonism, his own tribe accepted the message and recognized his religious and political authority. Under the direction of this charismatic prophet, one Indian group after another abandoned its traditional ways and joined the confederation. Soon its strength reached many thousands. Then conquests began. First other Indian tribes fell as bands of warriors radiated out in all directions. Later the crusading army moved against European settlements in the New World. Spaniards to the south, English along the Atlantic coast, the French in the St. Lawrence Valley, even the Russians far to the north—all were subdued. Soon not only the religion but also the language, traditions, and political authority of the Indians dominated the entire continent.

As far-fetched and improbable as such a sequence of events may seem, Arab parallels at least suggest the possibility of exactly this kind of nomadic conquest. Indeed, several movements in American history closely resemble events in Arabia. The Pueblo Pope who initiated the 1680 uprising which expelled Spaniards from the upper Rio Grande Valley of New Mexico for more than a decade claimed divine inspiration. Further to the east Pontiac's ill-fated attempts to arouse his people and form an Indian confederation to drive away the white invaders, while not overtly religious, contained some characteristics of a spiritual revival. In the early nineteenth century the efforts of Tecumseh and his twin brother the Prophet Tenskwatawa (whose name alone should stimulate comparisons) planned a religious and political movement which in many aspects paralleled events in the Arab world. The Ghost Dance movement among the Sioux in the last years of the century was similar—although it occurred so late in the process of conquest that success seemed unlikely. Recent growth in the Native American Church may represent a comparable reaction. Perhaps historians familiar with the history of the Middle East would be less prone than others to portray all such movements as doomed from their inception.

JUST AS TURNER, WEBB, and a host of others have developed explanations for events in America, other historians have carefully analyzed Arabian history and explained the relationships between aridity, nomadism, and conquest. The earliest and most revealing of these explanations was that of Ibn Khaldun (A.D. 1332-1406), whose *Muqaddamah: An Introduction to History* would merit study by anyone interested in the American frontier. He concluded that the harsh life of the desert, where only the essentials were available, produced tough and hardy men, in contrast to over-fed, and under-exercised urbanites. Whenever a great leader emerged to unite them into a single army, the nomads' natural superiority led to inevitable victory over sedentary populations. Once the nomads captured cities and settled in them, however, decline set in. Soon they, too, lost their fighting abilities and became vulnerable to attack. In a cyclical pattern, new nomadic armies arrived and conquered them. Strength and victory, not weakness and defeat, resulted from nomadic life in an arid environment. Only

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The nomadic life-style of the Plains Indian was possible because his shelter was easily transportable.

ARAMCO WORLD, BEIRUT

Bedouin tents also permitted mobility. This view shows a summer encampment near wells in eastern Saudi Arabia.

RALPH W. ANDREWS

Navajo riders cross Arizona's spectacular Canyon de Chelly in a 1906 photograph by Edward S. Curtis.

THOMAS WALTERS, ARAMCO WORLD, BEIRUT

Eroded cliffs of Jordan's Wadi Rumm bear startling resemblance to those in the American Southwest.

when men settled down were they vulnerable to conquest.

Ibn Khaldun's conclusions may seem illogical to frontier historians familiar with the defeat of nomads by settlers; but their own assumptions of sedentary superiority would appear just as absurd to those acquainted with the Bedouin world. Certainly Turner's description of frontier development by people increasingly tied to a single location, or Webb's chronicle of farmers taming the Great Plains, would be incomprehensible.

American historians, especially those engaged in local or regional studies, have often been guilty of a narrow provincialism bordering on antiquarianism. They have been so wrapped up in describing events and developing hypotheses about their limited specialties that they have failed to examine their conclusions in the broader context of world affairs. There have been exceptions and some notable recent efforts to break out of traditional confines. Turner's thesis, for example, has been tested in areas as different as Australia and the Soviet Union. But similar studies focusing on the impact of aridity or the character of nomadic life such as have been suggested here ought to prove enlightening.

What lessons, then, can the history of the Arabian Peninsula provide to those whose interests focus on western America? First, it is obvious that nomads have not always been the losers. And just as the Bedouins succeeded in defeating those settled communities which surrounded them, so might the American Indians have succeeded in overcoming the European farms and towns in North America. Other factors—technology, numbers, success in particular battles—may have tipped the scales of American history, but cultural and geographical considerations alone provide inadequate explanations for the Indians' defeat. Second, the Arab experience underlines the importance of dynamic leadership. A single individual, the Prophet Mohammed, was largely responsible for the turnabout in Arabic history. With a few notable exceptions, however, historians and even anthropologists have looked at American Indians as groups, paying remarkably little attention to the internal dynamics of their societies or the importance of charismatic leadership. Additional work in this field is obviously merited. Third, religion was vital in reinvigorating the Arabs. We know remarkably little about the religions of America's nomads and even less of revivalistic movements and the reasons for their failure. Finally, the whole concept of comparative history requires additional attention by students of the frontier. Not until events in the West are viewed in universal, broadly humanistic terms can their full meaning be determined.

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Many of the ideas in this article were stimulated by *The Comparative Approach to American History* (C. Van Woodward, editor; New York, 1968), especially Ray Billington's chapter on "Frontiers." Wallace Stegner suggested but did not develop comparisons between Arabian and western American history in *Discovery! The Search for Arabian Oil* (Beirut, 1971).

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PETER SKENE OGDEN:

BRIGHAM YOUNG HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Fur Trader Extraordinaire

Trapping, Exploration, and Adventure on the Canadian and American Frontiers

By
Clarence P. Socwell

OGDEN CITY, OGDEN RIVER, MOUNT OGDEN, OGDEN VALLEY! Who left such an indelible mark on the area of Utah through which he passed? He was Peter Skene Ogden, not a Mormon settler in famed Mormon country, but a native of Quebec—a fur trapper, Indian fighter, rascal, outlaw, explorer, and youngest chief trader of the powerful Hudson's Bay Company. Truly a giant among men, Ogden overcame formidable dangers and obstacles as he supervised early trapping expeditions in unmapped regions along the Snake and Columbia rivers, across California and portions of the Southwest, and through the rugged wilderness of Canada and Alaska.

Ogden came by his preference for adventure naturally; his father, Canadian Isaac Ogden, had agitated fiercely against the oppressions of England—until he married his second wife, Sarah Hanson, and returned his loyalty to the Crown and the church. Peter was born in 1794 and spent his boyhood in Montreal, where he heard Scotsmen of the North West Fur Company vividly describe their adventures on the lakes and rivers of the western wilderness. These tales aroused Peter's enthusiasm for the romantic life—as well as for the prospect of wealth and prominence.

Although he dreamed of the untrammeled life of the Indian trader and trapper, young Ogden at first followed dutifully in his father's footsteps and studied law. When he reached the age of seventeen, however, he gave up his prospects for a law career and signed on as clerk for the North West Company. He was to work for seven years at Ile a la Crosse, three thousand miles into the Canadian wilderness, at a wage of fifteen pounds per year. His mother willingly signed the necessary papers because she was sure that Peter, like her brothers, would return to Montreal and settle down after his fling. Little did she realize how powerful a hold the wilderness would have on her youngest child.

On the way to Ile a la Crosse Peter fit in easily with the voyageurs. When threatened with the newcomer's traditional

icy baptism in the Ottawa River, he escaped by sharing a bottle of spirits he'd wisely brought along. Later he proudly hoisted a ninety-pound pack to carry over a two-mile portage —but was astounded when he saw another voyageur shoulder five packs that size.

At Ile a la Crosse Peter took a Cree Indian as his wife and quickly became a fellow among the Nor'Westers and an enemy of the rival Hudson's Bay trappers. He annoyed the Hudson's Bay men from the nearby fort by setting their fish nets adrift, and once he and Samuel Black, a big Scotsman, brashly swaggered right into the Hudson's Bay fort to harass their competitors.

In 1816, virtual warfare broke out between the two companies as a result of trouble at a Hudson's Bay colony at Red River. Ogden and his fellow Nor'Westers captured the Hudson's Bay fort at Ile a la Crosse, taking 20 traders and 120 women and children prisoner. During the harsh winter, captors and prisoners alike became dejected and emaciated. Ogden was regarded as a terror at the fort because, according to a Hudson's Bay clerk, he'd committed a "most barbarous murder of an Indian." Peter defended his harsh actions, claiming that "necessity has no laws; and in this place . . . we must . . . sometimes perform the parts of judge, jury, sheriff, hangman, gallows and all!"

In the summer of 1819 a formal indictment charging Ogden with murder was sent to Ile a la Crosse, but the North West Company had sent him safely away the previous year. Ogden had crossed the mountains, heading west for the company's trading post at the mouth of the Columbia River, and had left his Cree wife and two sons behind.

He found Fort George, the former Astoria, to be an impressive group of log buildings which included apartments, stores, warehouses, shops, a dining hall, and a stockade. A garden flourished on the slope of the river above the dock. Food was plentiful, and so were Indian concubines and the related need for the mercury cure.

Soon after Ogden's arrival word came that an Iroquois free trapper had been murdered and robbed by Cowlitz Indians. Although the incident was already old, Ogden went with a band of Iroquois to investigate. Once in sight of the Cowlitz village, Ogden sent the Iroquois freemen ahead to scout the settlement, with the warning not to molest anyone. But within minutes shots rang out. The irresponsible Iroquois were trying to exterminate the whole village, and in the confusion thirteen unresisting Cowlitz died. Ogden drove the Iroquois back to the canoes while arrows and bullets whizzed after them.

By spring the Cowlitz had been somewhat appeased through a series of meetings with their chief. The trappers devised a maneuver to regain trade: a marriage between a gentleman of the fort and the chief's daughter would bind relationships. The devil-may-care Ogden accepted the task, taking the Indian girl as his wife in an elaborately courteous ceremony. But as the Cowlitz chief and his entourage were leaving the fort after the wedding celebration, they ran into some enemy Chinooks who attacked them. In the confusion, guards at the fort caught the Indians in a crossfire. When the incident had ended, the chief and traders were further alienated than ever despite the apologies that followed.

OGDEN STAYED AT FORT GEORGE until 1820 when he was sent to the inland post of Fort Thompson, the center of the most difficult trapping district in the Canadian West. After the soft life at Fort George, he was glad to have the opportunity to prove himself. Ogden was duly awarded one share of the company's holdings, making him a partner as well as an employee. He settled down to a comfortable existence, steadied by his dependable Cree wife and sons who had joined him.

Just a year later, however, astounding news reached the fort. The North West Company was no more, having been amalgamated with Hudson's Bay and taking on its name. Furthermore, three men who were deemed undesirable employees had been removed from the company roster. Ogden's was one of them! Nevertheless, the company asked him to stay on until a relief could arrive. Although his discharge was a mortifying experience, Ogden agreed out of loyalty. He remained through the winter.

In the spring Ogden left his wife and boys at Ile a la Crosse and continued overland to Montreal, and thence by sea to the Hudson's Bay main office in London, England, where he petitioned Governor Simpson to reinstate him. Ogden made a favorable impression and was appointed a clerk of the first class with a salary equivalent to that of a chief trader.

Then Peter proceeded to Taunton, England, where his eighty-two-year-old father, frail and in pain after two operations, praised his son's penetration of the Far West. Peter's mother still felt he would return to a more settled existence once he'd made his fortune. She introduced him to charming young English ladies, but Peter saw they didn't have the necessary qualities for life in the wilderness. In March 1823 he returned to London on the first lap of his journey back to the fur country.

Back in Canada, the York Factory officials put Ogden in charge of the overland express to the Columbia River. He hoped to make a quick trip across the continent and to prove his abilities once he arrived back in the Northwest, but events didn't work out as he'd anticipated.

The journey across the wilderness was beset by trouble. Mosquitoes and deer flies swarmed over the voyageurs constantly. Ogden, a short, heavy-set man, provided them with ample territory to invade. On Lake Winnipeg, Cross Lake, and Cedar Lake, winds and high waves lashed the canoes, forcing the party to make unplanned layovers on shore. One man deserted, taking some of the vital food supplies with him. Much of the remaining food became moldy in the damp weather. Replacement supplies at Ile a la Crosse were inadequate, and the canoes there were so inferior that Ogden's men

OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

As chief factor for the Hudson's Bay Company, Peter Skene Ogden spent several years at Fort Vancouver.

had to repair their old and battered ones. And there Ogden learned that his Cree wife had left his children with her family and had disappeared. He never saw her again.

Moose Portage, where the men had expected additional supplies, was burnt over and abandoned. Part of the group trudged on ahead and wandered for days before finally returning with a little food. Ogden contracted an illness that left him weak, shivering, and sometimes delirious. The water in the rivers got so low that the men had to portage great distances. When a canoe laden with food finally met them, the Indian guides refused to paddle it back upstream. Ogden and the company clerk took some of the supplies and forged on ahead.

Still shivering from illness, Ogden pressed on to Jasper House, the end of the long canoe journey. From there on, the express proceeded by horseback, crossing and recrossing rivers, tramping through mires and along narrow defiles and valleys, until it finally reached the Columbia. More tedious portages followed on this final stage of the journey to Spokane House. Ogden arrived there on October 28, 1823. His journey from York Factory had taken three months and ten days.

Spokane House, established fourteen years before, was surrounded by friendly Indian lodges and an Indian burial ground. The post resembled a peaceful country estate with its lawns, shade trees, and race track for fine horses. Attractive young Indian women, versed in the white man's styles of clothing, conversation, and dancing, graced the ballroom.

Ogden found himself attracted to an older, less sophisticated woman. Julia Rivet, a Flathead who seldom visited the fort, was a stepdaughter of Francois Rivet, a French trapper. Ogden made many visits to Julia's lodge. But when he proposed marriage, she coldly changed the subject.

Ogden realized that he would have to propose in accordance with Flathead custom if he was to win her. He bought fifty horses and furnished an apartment at the fort. Then, taking the horses to Julia's village, he sent them, one at a time, to her lodge. Her mother accepted them while the villagers looked on. Finally, amid shouts of the villagers, Julia rode the last horse, a beautiful gold and cream mare, out to where Ogden was waiting. To complete the ceremony, the two rode together around the village and fort.

Julia proved herself to be a fond and wise mother, even to her stepchildren, whom Ogden brought from the Cree village at Ile a la Crosse.

A YEAR AFTER OGDEN'S ARRIVAL at Spokane House, Governor Simpson visited the Northwest to reorganize the trapping operations. With him was Dr. John McLoughlin, who took charge of the Columbia River district for Hudson's Bay. They gave Ogden the formidable task of trapping the Snake River country. Julia insisted on going along and took the children, including her own small baby.

Ogden's journal of his 1824–25 expedition is filled with descriptions and reports on the land traversed and beaver trapped. In February 1825 he observed in his journal that "there is certainly a fatality attending the Snake Country & all Snake Expeditions for without exception no voyage to that country has been undertaken without serious accidents ensuing, thus we are only on the outset of our voyage & have already lost a man & 18 horses, but we must persevere & not despair."

The Hudson's Bay expedition—nearly sixty men strong—crossed and recrossed the path of competing American trappers. Some of Ogden's men deserted to join the Americans, with whom they could get more money for their pelts and at a lower cost for their supplies. During the winter Indians stole horses and killed several of the trappers. Though the men sometimes killed more bounty than they could use, hunger often stalked Ogden's brigade. Julia shielded the children from major disasters, but only by means of resolute courage. When six-year-old Charles contracted a cold, she swam the icy Snake River to catch a goose the men had shot, in order to get the goose grease and goose broth to cure him.

In May Ogden found numerous beaver along the Bear River. From its headwaters he crossed the mountains into unmapped territory to the south and found a new river and valley where no white man had ever trapped. These subsequently became known as the Ogden River and Ogden's Hole (now Ogden Valley, Utah).

One afternoon Etienne Provot of the Americans' Rocky Mountain Fur Company came to the Ogden camp. Accompanying his well-armed band were fourteen of Ogden's missing trappers. The visitors announced that in this free territory Hudson's Bay men could desert whether or not they were indebted or engaged. The next morning John Grey, an Iroquois freeman, ordered all of Ogden's Iroquois guides to desert. As they began to leave, one of the men pointed his gun at Ogden and threatened to kill him. But Ogden stood fast and collected some of the deserting trappers' debts. Others, however, escaped with furs, horses, and equipment.

At the same time, unknown to Ogden, Julia was also in

Early in his career Ogden gained experience at Fort George, John Jacob Astor's former post on the Columbia River.

OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

UTAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

An early photograph of Ogden's Hole (now Ogden Valley), Utah, discovered by Peter Skene Ogden during his far-ranging 1824–25 Snake River expedition.

trouble. Eight-month-old Michael was strapped to the saddle of one of the horses that the Americans had stampeded. Julia ran boldly right into the American camp, found her horse and Michael, and spurred out, grabbing as she went the rope of a fur-laden horse nearby. The Americans raised their guns but, admiring her bravery, let her pass.

After the desertions, Ogden feared the failure of the entire expedition, but nevertheless the remaining members plodded back to the Snake River. They found more beaver and traded with the usually hostile Blood Indians. Still more men deserted until Ogden was left with only sixteen. And Indians raided the party until only a few horses were left. Finally, in November 1824 the expedition returned to the Columbia River with four thousand pelts, no more than had been obtained the previous year.

In November of the following year Ogden set out for the Klamath region to the south where Dr. McLoughlin had sent an advance party. Julia, seven months pregnant, stayed behind at Fort Vancouver.

A few days out, the expedition met the usual problem of Indian thefts. In his diary Ogden complained that "to discover [the horses we] were obliged to pay 30 balls and powder." Ogden found the advance party with only 460 beaver pelts to show for months of troubles and starvation. He quickly turned east to Snake country. But on the way to the Snake River, the party had to kill two horses for food; some men were so desperate they stole beaver from other hunters' traps when they had none in their own.

In his journal Ogden described his men as "all reduced to skin and bones, and more beggardly wretched looking beings I defy the world to produce. . . . They labor in quest of food and beaver, and the greater part without a shoe to their feet. . . ." The Indians fared no better, living on prickly pear cactus and ants.

Conditions changed a little in March 1826. The hunters acquired some buffalo meat from the Snake Indians and later killed several elk and two buffalo. But not long afterward Ogden wrote, "The beaver have a strange taste—different from any I have ever eaten." The "strange taste" was caused by the beaver chewing hemlocks growing in the area. Many men who had eaten the beaver, including Ogden, were stricken with violent pains and paralysis of the arms and legs. Pepper and gunpowder relieved the condition after hours of agony.

The expedition ended in the middle of July. In his journal, Ogden concluded: "Had we not been obliged from the severity of the winter to kill our horses for food, the success of our expedition would have yielded handsome profits. As it is, fortunately no loss will be sustained."

After a few months of rest Ogden returned south again to the Klamath country. Reports that Indians had resorted to cannibalism the previous winter prompted him to write, "What an example to us at present reduced to one meal a day, how loudly and grievously we complain. . . ." On this trip Ogden named California's Mount Sastise (Shasta), described the ingenious huts of Klamath Indians, and finally observed that "I have done my duty examining this barren country, but our

loss has been greater than our profit."

A few weeks back in Fort Vancouver were all that Ogden allowed himself before starting back again into the Snake country. This time his five children and Julia, four months pregnant, rode with him. Ogden was no longer afraid that his men might desert, but he was concerned that Americans would trap all of the beaver before him. Once he forcibly detained a number of American trappers while his advance party trapped out the streams ahead.

Peter and Julia's sixth child, David, was born on February 1, 1828, and died before the month was out. They buried him in a willow grove. Others in the expedition were killed by Indians. By the end of July Ogden was able to make his final entry: "So ends my 4th trip to Snake Country, and I have to regret the loss of lives. [But] the returns far exceeded my expectations."

In September Ogden set out on his fifth expedition into Snake country, his brigade again including his family. After the death of trapper Joseph Paul on New Year's Day, 1829, he wrote, "There remains now only one man of all the Snake men of 1819. All have been killed with the exception of 2 who died a natural death and [they are all] scattered over the Snake Country. It is incredible the number that have fallen. . . ."

The expedition worked its way along the Humboldt, around the north end of Great Salt Lake, and through Ogden Valley. Only a map recorded this part of the trip, but Ogden's journal later resumed to tell of the approach of two hundred Modoc warriors, against whom the fur hunters stood fast. Ogden inquired about the region, barred the Indians from camp, and departed unharmed. In July 1829 he summed up the expedition: "We have no cause to complain on our returns."

Before his sixth and final Snake expedition, Ogden sent his son Peter to the Red River settlement for schooling. Julia and the other children stayed at Fort Nez Perces with her mother.

Ogden's account of his 1829–30 expedition was lost when his boat capsized on the last leg of the journey, but he later wrote that "I extended my trails by far greater distance to the Gulf of California but found beaver very scarce."

OGDEN PASSED THE FOLLOWING YEAR at Fort Vancouver. The area was ravaged by malaria and many of the Indians died. Ogden escaped with only a short illness, but had to postpone his new assignment to establish a post on the Nass River. Finally, in the spring of 1831 the expedition shipped up the coast, where Ogden found the natives unarmed and friendly—a welcome relief after his dealings to the south. Fort Simpson was built, and the natives readily traded all of the beaver that they could trap. Ogden's only regret was that he had to pay such a high price—a blanket for a skin—because of American competition.

After three years on the Nass, Ogden was called to explore farther north up the Stikine River. This area, however, was controlled by a Russian company that forbade Ogden's passage despite attempts to negotiate. The Russians spoke no English, and no one in Ogden's group spoke their language. Instead of building on the Stikine, Ogden had to erect a fort at McLoughlin Harbor.

Soon after the new post was completed, Ogden returned to Fort Vancouver where he was both praised and criticized for his dealings with the Russians. In the spring of 1835, however, Ogden was commissioned to the highest rank in the company —chief factor. He left Vancouver in July and took charge of the New Caledonia district with headquarters at Fort St. James. Life at the fort was a dream come true. Ogden reigned over fort and district like a king. His clothes were formal, he was honored with gun salutes whenever he returned from inspection trips, and he got on well with the Indians even though his predecessors had experienced trouble. Ogden's qualities and experience made him perfect for the job; he was fearless without being tactless, serious without being humorless. And he was short and fat, which was another point in his favor. One of the Indians' most revered heroes had been short and fat, and Ogden let it be believed that he might be the hero's reincarnation.

During ten years at New Caledonia two more Ogden children were born—Euretta Mary, who was mentally retarded, and Isaac, the couple's last child. Ogden also saw his fourteen-year-old daughter, Sarah Julia, marry Archibald McKinley.

In 1844 Ogden took a year's leave of absence—a well-earned vacation. He went back alone to Montreal and Three Rivers, and sailed on to England and the European continent. But the industrial movement dismayed him, and he anxiously returned to America.

Back at Fort Vancouver Ogden joined Dr. McLoughlin and James Douglas in forming a board of management over the Columbia River district—of which he and Douglas were left in charge when McLoughlin resigned in 1846. At this time American settlers were actively setting up democratic government in Oregon City; even Britishers were running for office. Ogden became the unofficial foreign correspondent for Oregon newspapers and an imposing figure in the social life of the region—a judge at horse races, a patron of a proposed curling club.

December 1847 brought an emergency that Ogden reacted to with wisdom and dispatch—the Whitman massacre by Cayuse Indians at Waiilatpu. Ogden rescued the surviving American captives, negotiating with the Indians for their release. He worked quickly, before the Indians heard that the American army was approaching. A Northwest newspaper called his act "the legitimate offspring of a noble, generous, and manly heart." But Ogden modestly claimed to have merely acted as an agent for the Hudson's Bay Company.

Through the mad years of the California gold rush, the establishing of settlements on Vancouver Island, and the en-

Continued on page 61

A Matter of Opinion

THE AMERICAN WEST: A Potpourri of Opinion

On the "Matter of Opinion" page in the January 1973 AMERICAN WEST, *we solicited readers' opinions with regard to this magazine's present editorial policy and the direction it should take in the future. Herewith we present a sampling of excerpts from that response.*

TO THE EDITOR:

As a charter member, I would like to refer you to the introductory page of the first issue of THE AMERICAN WEST (Winter 1964, Volume 1) that was written by Gale McGee, U.S. Senator, Wyoming. He stated that "There is no area of the country with a history more interesting and more distorted in the public mind than the American West. . . . I believe that we . . . deserve a factual history on which we can build and maintain the richly deserved respect and admiration for the truly great feat of developing the West. This is the challenge that will face THE AMERICAN WEST. . . . I am confident that THE AMERICAN WEST will provide this necessary historical service."

This statement provides an excellent guideline for editorial policy. With the use of Ann Zwinger's comment, I believe you are once again attempting to intimidate the readers. I am aware that you mentioned the continued emphasis on "human history," but I am concerned about the intent and extent of your search for articles that have a more direct and positive relationship with the present.

I do not believe that too many fields of interest or disciplines should be presented. Such a policy would dilute and deemphasize the original purpose of this magazine. I am in favor of presenting articles concerning natural history, conservation, and ecology that directly relate to the historical purposes of this magazine. Publish another magazine that would deal with the above topics for those who desire more than a "steady diet of history."

Milt Axt, Jr.
San Francisco, California

TO THE EDITOR:

I am strongly in favor of efforts to present an account of past events as a basis for understanding and evaluating today's world. This implies a historical orientation, and thus I would prefer to see THE AMERICAN WEST devoted entirely to social, economic, military, technological, natural science, and other historical aspects of the West. But. . . . in the real world of today, it is probably essential to broaden the presentation enough to draw support from the individual who must have ecology and conservation in his daily diet. I am interested in natural history, and in conservation, and I was interested in ecology long before today's "eco-freaks" knew there was such a word. . . . However, with so many publications giving way to strident attacks upon every facet of our culture, I would be dismayed if THE AMERICAN WEST became one more outlet for these self-elected "militants" who, like the Six Blind Men of Hindustan, "Prate on about an elephant not one of them has seen."

All of which is not intended to diminish the importance of ecological studies, discussion, and even controversy. But it is my opinion that publications such as THE AMERICAN WEST can contribute to the general understanding by printing factual, objective articles on subjects in the general fields of ecology and conservation, and avoiding the adversary position. Present the facts, unpleasant though they may be, and even summarize the conflicting points of view, but try to avoid the advocacy of any particular one.

Walter R. Averett
Parkersburg, West Virginia

TO THE EDITOR:

If your scope of articles were generalized more, I would not renew our subscription. It's that simple. To copy a paragraph from another western magazine, "The ecological awakening of this country is more than a passing fancy or a present day fad. The environmental movement may well be a sign of the times wherein man is coming to realize the necessity for actively protecting some of his intangible values—rather than taking them for granted." The same may be said for history.

Mrs. Harley Wyatt, Jr.
Liberty, Missouri

TO THE EDITOR:

My first reaction to your request for inputs on what type of information "A Matter of Opinion" should contain was to recommend a reduction in the number of letters commenting on other articles printed in previous issues, but after deeper thought and consideration, I have come to the conclusion these articles have served a very useful purpose. Upon occasion I too have thought about writing a comment, especially after reading Nancy Woods' article titled "Clearcutting" which contained gross errors plus misleading, but was so aptly put back into proper perspective by Regional Forester Douglas Leisz's letter. Then again James Jackson's article "The Enduring Sandhills" in the latest issue moves me to write.

The Sandhills are a real love of mine and I was pleased to

Continued on page 60

Floor of the Sky: The Great Plains

REVIEWED BY STEVE CROUCH

A BOOK OF THIS TYPE is usually meant to be approached either as a work of purely informational nature—illustrated by photographs to point up the text—or as a visual experience, able to stand on the merits of the images alone, its words secondary in importance or even inconsequential. For the most part, the large-format Sierra Club books published previously have tended to the latter, with their photographs comprising the all-important elements. But, perhaps because the Great Plains have less of a visual handle for a photographer to grasp than do many previous areas that have been covered, this book depends as much on words as on images.

Floor of the Sky: The Great Plains by David Plowden, introduction by John G. Mitchell *(Sierra Club, New York, 1972; 128 pp., illus., maps, notes, $19.75).*

The text of *Floor of the Sky* takes the reader on a historical walk across the plains and through the years since the land was formed: the first men appeared; much later the white settlers followed, beating the original inhabitants into submission and converting the prairie from an immense grassland covered with game into an overgrazed pasture for cattle.

For the photographer the Great Plains presents a difficult subject. Short-grass country might be characterized as a continuum of vast emptynesses, and the average photographer is baffled in his attempts to interpret a region so often devoid of arresting and distinguishing features.

Most often the best photographs of any area come from a photographer of talent, taste, and discernment who sees his subject in all its moods and varieties over a period of many seasons. He has the edge because he is able to be there at those times when earth, sky, and the elements are all working together for him. The traveler has no such opportunity to photograph repeatedly and at leisure and to wait for that perfect moment; he must take things as he finds them and move on. He works at a great disadvantage in that he is usually in the right place at the wrong time.

Therefore, it is a tribute to David Plowden that (in this reviewer's estimation) of the seventy-four photographs in the book, thirty are competently-done documentary photographs; thirty-one can be classed as very good; twelve are truly fine photographs; and one is superb—a stark black road stretching into the shimmering distances of sunburned Montana fields in late summer. A batting average of better than .500 by a roving photographer (Plowden is a New Yorker) during two spring and three summer months is remarkable indeed.

Plowden's photographs of the Great Plains deal less in specifics than in impressions and symbols. For one who has never seen this region, the pictures may seem only empty and repelling. But for this reader, who retains a strong memory of his adolescent years on the plains of western Kansas and the Texas Panhandle as well as several tours of army duty at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, the pictures at their best recall memories of the heat and discomfort of prairie noon in midsummer; the sound of the everlasting wind sweeping through dry grasses and grain fields; the bone-chilling cold of a winter wind on an Oklahoma hilltop, with nothing but barbed wire fences between one's self and the North Pole; and the sharp smell of dust blown from far distances. The good memories are resurrected here, too: cool breezes that blow over the heated land in the evening, immense vistas when the air is clear of dust, the nights that follow when every star in the sky hangs close enough to reach, and the excitement of a black thunderstorm gathering over the sun-swept prairie.

Of course, like all Sierra Club books, this one is an appeal for wisdom in the immediate and long-range use of the land, so that at least a portion of it may be preserved in its natural state and the rest not turned into an artificial desert. One is prone to say that such preservation should be for the benefit of future generations. Future generations have nothing to do with such a cause; preservation and conservation should be practiced for the sake of the Earth itself —present and future generations of mankind are only a fractional part of the whole ecosystem.

The thrust of Plowden's case for saving the Great Plains is directed toward the hope that population pressures threatening the land will not result in over-utilization and in great areas being put to the plow for high-yield protein crops, with the earth being literally mined for all available water and every stream dammed and directed upon the fields.

Plowden feels that possibly the lone hope for the plains is their characteristic lack of abundant water. It may be that he hopes in vain; such obstacles have not often deterred determined men who have all the tools at hand to change the face of the earth.

Regardless of that, *Floor of the Sky* is a welcome addition to the literature of a land about which much has been written but which has inspired precious few good photographic images to reinforce the words. David Plowden has made a valuable contribution in that direction.

Steve Crouch, *a widely published photographer for twenty-five years, is author of* Steinbeck Country, *to be published by the American West Publishing Company in the fall of 1973.*

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The Time of the Buffalo

REVIEWED BY WAYNE GARD

ANYONE FLYING LOW over the Great Plains after a heavy rain might be correct in assuming that some of the large puddles he sees are remnants of buffalo wallows. Those gouged-out places where the animals used to rub themselves in the dust are among the few reminders still to be seen of vast herds that once spread over the grasslands as far as the eye could see.

The Time of the Buffalo by Tom McHugh *(Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1972; 345 pp., illus., maps, biblio., appen., index, $10.00).*

Early travelers who wrote of herds that numbered half a million or even a million head probably did not exaggerate. Scientists have estimated the total buffalo population of Indian days at sixty to seventy-five million, although Tom McHugh, in his new book, *The Time of the Buffalo,* calculates it at a more modest thirty million.

Before the whites came, Indians seldom killed more buffalo than they needed for food, clothing, and shelter, though sometimes they yielded to the temptation to drive a whole herd over a cliff. Yet in the fur trade they made larger killings for robes; and later white hunters, who slaughtered for hides alone and left the carcasses to rot, almost wiped out the herds in a dozen years, 1871–83.

McHugh, in a fascinating narrative, an outgrowth of his doctoral dissertation at the University of Wisconsin, tells the whole story of the buffalo, from days of the Ice Age to the present grazing of small herds in national parks and other refuges. He shows how dependent the Plains Indians were upon these beasts, coexisting with them "in a rare balance between nature and man."

The author explains methods the Indians used in buffalo hunting—the surround, the pound, and the chase. He describes hunting of the animals for sport by such visitors as Sir St. George Gore from Ireland and Grand Duke Alexis from Russia. As for the later clearing of buffalo from the plains by hide men, the author realizes that this was necessary to gain ranges for cattle and sheep; but he notes that it could have been done with much less waste.

In curtailing his account of the final slaughter, which other writers have related in more detail, McHugh has reserved space for a unique contribution —a personal report of present buffalo herds in protected pastures. By camping near herds in various reserves and in different seasons, he was able to check on the habits of the animals in feeding, playing, fighting, mating, calving, and protecting their young. He found the conduct of today's buffalo remarkably like that of their ancestors as described a century ago.

The author also discusses the rare white buffalo; the merits of buffalo flesh as food; and efforts to cross buffalo with beef cattle. He traces the efforts over several decades to save these animals from extinction, giving deserved credit to various crusaders. In particular he praises Ernest Harold Baynes, who waged a vigorous writing and speaking campaign and who led in the formation of the American Bison Society in 1905. Today thirty thousand buffalo in the United States and Canada assure the survival of the continent's largest animal.

This effort, as McHugh notes, should give heart to those now trying to save other threatened species. "The rescue of the buffalo has been a dramatic and encouraging success, but it marks no more than a beginning."

The volume, to which the Knopf firm has given its usual handsome format, has maps and a generous number of fine pictures, many of them by the author, a former photographer for Walt Disney. Although the book lacks notes, it has the marks of admirable scholarship. The author, not content merely to retrace the work of earlier writers, has looked into neglected sources and thus added much to what is known about buffalo. He presents all this in a lively narrative that holds the reader's interest and re-creates a romantic era of grasslands life.

Wayne Gard *is author of* The Great Buffalo Hunt, The Chisholm Trail, *and other books on the West.*

The Arena of Life: The Dynamics of Ecology

REVIEWED BY DAVID CAVAGNARO

CONSIDER THESE remarkable facts: Forests of giant cedars clothed the slopes of Lebanon in biblical times where now only deserts exist.

Because of their rapid rate of reproduction, fruit flies have had a greater opportunity to evolve during the past seventy-two years than man has had since 1400 A.D. In only fifty generations, houseflies have evolved resistance to DDT and other insecticides while brown pelicans are no longer able to breed successfully because of pesticides concentrated in their tissues.

The Arena of Life: The Dynamics of Ecology by Lorus and Margery Milne *(Doubleday/Natural History Press, New York, 1972; 352 pp., illus., charts, biblio., glossary, index, $15.00).*

The energy we expend through the use of fossil fuels to create and run the machines and produce the chemicals used to grow, harvest, package, and distribute most of our food is many times greater than the energy that food contains.

Many wells are exhausting stores of fossil water left over from the Pleistocene, supplies which are not currently being replenished.

Because of the construction of the Aswan High Dam, there has been a dramatic increase of disease-carrying blood flukes in the Nile lowlands; soil unrenewed by flooding has become less productive; agricultural lands of the Nile delta have become increasingly salty and may soon be useless; and the eastern Mediterranean has experienced a drastic reduction in fishery resources, with subsequent economic hardships among the Egyptian people.

How could man have foreseen these startling consequences of his actions on this planet? That is what the science of ecology is all about. Ecology is a relatively new science, so vast in its scope and implications that it is often difficult for the narrow vision of both layman and scientist to grasp the breadth of its relationships.

Here at last is a book that translates this most urgent and important of all fields of science into terms anyone can understand. The *Arena of Life* is a thorough, exciting, awesome, and sometimes frightening examination of the way life functions on earth and of the role man has played, and continues to play with increasing power, in altering natural systems.

The book deals first with basic ecological concepts. In chapters entitled "Energy for Life;" "Cycles, Pyramids, and Niches;" "The Physical Challenges to Life;" "Avoiding Conflict Within the Species;" "How Different Species Live Together," and "Growth of Populations," the authors paint a splendid picture of the varied life-styles that exist among our earthly companions and the important systems that sustain them.

The middle of the book is devoted primarily to man. Perhaps the most revealing chapter traces the step-by-step alteration of the earth throughout human history as man's technology has grown and his attitudes have changed.

Seven of the last chapters discuss some of the remarkable ways in which organisms have adapted to life in different habitats—the oceans, fresh water, the soil, forests, grasslands, deserts, and the polar regions. These chapters are a glorious illustration of the way the world is at its very best, the way it has become as a result of a long and systematic kind of evolution. Here and there are haunting examples of how our own species has interfered.

Do you know that some shearwaters circumnavigate the whole Pacific, yet almost all arrive at their Australian nesting grounds within a three-day period? Do you know that an elephant may have one offspring every two years while an oyster may produce up to 500 million eggs, all simply to replenish the species?

Do you know that many trees will not grow properly without certain fungi associated with their roots, and most corals cannot build reefs unless they possess certain algae within their tissues? That the strange Grylloblatas (abominable snow crickets, I call them) tolerate subfreezing temperatures during much of

Continued on page 57

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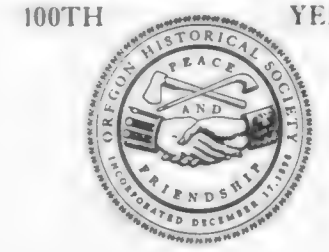

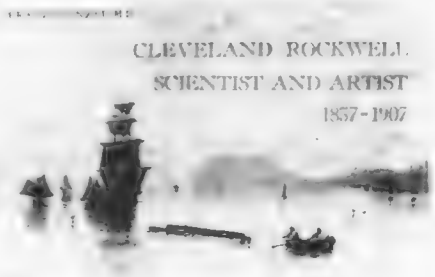

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The Cowboy in American Prints edited by John Meigs *(Swallow Press, Chicago, 1972; 184 pp., illus., index, $15.00).*

REVIEWED BY JACK BURROWS

THE COWBOY HAS NEVER BEEN relegated to periods of nostalgia. He has been as steady and constant in the American mind and heart as he was, for the most part, in his habits. And he would have remained alive even without the reminder of movies and television, alive and green in our need of him, the lone horseman, moving from one indefinite horizon to another across an immutable landscape that neither dominated him nor was dominated by him, a land that was not closing in on him, a land without definition.

But in our need—call it a groping for steady and tangible values or call it escapism from a stifling and rigidly defined urbanization—we have accepted perversions rather than interpretations by motion pictures, television, and bad literature. We have seen the cowboy as a grotesquely dressed dude; rustler and gunman; avenger; do-gooder; a saddle tramp astride a thoroughbred horse that would be the equivalent of a part-time laborer driving a Cadillac; even as a sadistic and embittered intellectual expatriate from eastern society, trapped between the groves of academe and the high chaparral. That the cowboy nevertheless remains real, even universal, is owing to a small group of writer-historians and artists who have known him and have taken him and his life seriously, and whose integrity and discipline do not permit exploitation.

The Cowboy in American Prints, edited by John Meigs, is a fine example of artistic integrity and execution. Himself an artist, Meigs has written a perceptive and lucid essay to accompany a thoughtful selection of more than a hundred black-and-white illustrations and plates—woodcuts, etchings, lithographs, pen and ink sketches and engravings—that range from the 1850s to the present, from Charlie Russell to Joe Beeler, from Frederic Remington to Peter Hurd.

Aside from the general excellence of the works, distinctions between early and contemporary artists is subtly limned. L. W. MacDonald's ". . . Stampede . . ." (1881) reveals a uniformity of movement more startling than the lightning bolt that spooks a herd of longhorns; the critters are all the same size, heading tightly in the same direction, heads at the same level. Legs flair out as if the herd is suspended on a merry-go-round. Edward Borein's ". . . Longhorns" are not stampeding, but if these mean-eyed, hog-snouted brutes should get ideas, we know there won't be anything uniform about them.

Charlie Russell's "Corazon Reared Straight Up" features a bawling, sunfishing bronc who shakes himself like a great marlin and rattles the eyeballs of his rider. C. W. Anderson's horses in "Rodeo Sketches" are elongated, slender, transfixed in a kind of airborne, equine ballet. Frederic Remington's "Cowboys Coming to Town for Christmas" is picturesque in its plunging, carefree action, but its story does not transcend the sketch. We know the punchers will get drunk, carouse, and straggle painfully back to the ranch—or herd—in a day or so. Joe Beeler's "Arizona Cowboy," on the other hand, quietly sits his horse on the edge of a retreating landscape, somberly gazing into the distance and lifting us out of the sketch into his thoughts.

R. F. Zogbaum's "Life in a Dugout" (1882) reflects upon sharp distinctions in living: the totality of inside living, the lucubrations and pastimes before the fire, while outside are empty spaces and daylight dangers. Contemporary artists Alexandre Hogue and Peter Hurd subtly delineate the closing of the frontier, the transition from open range to defined ranch. Hogue's "Cap Rock Ranch" is high on a grassy, tree-blown flat in the midst of cacti-stippled buttes and truncated spires. But such civilities as a frame house and a whirring windmill transform it from the pristine to the pastoral. Hurd's view "From the Bunkhouse" is not of open range but of the towering frame and feathered blades of a pumping windmill. Inconspicuously Hurd defines his West: here a section of fence, a gate; there, the protruding snout of a Model T.

It's a good book, a satisfying one; reading it is like riding old and familiar trails again.

Jack Burrows *is a history instructor at San Jose City College, California.*

Flood Tide of Empire

Spain and the Pacific Northwest, 1543–1819

by Warren L. Cook

From the 16th to the 18th centuries Spain explored, and tried to claim, most of the Pacific coast of the New World from Tierra del Fuego to Alaska. No part of this vast territory was more hotly disputed than the Pacific Northwest, where Russian, British, and, later, United States ships vied with the Spanish for the lucrative trade in sea otter pelts. Professor Cook paints a detailed and colorful picture of the history of the Northwest, based on much new information from archives in Madrid, Mexico City, and Santa Fe. He gives a fascinating account of Spanish relations with natives of the Nootka region, Indians who proved to be alternately generous and vengeful, proud and shrewd. $17.50

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Burnt-Out Fires: California's Modoc Indian War by Richard Dillon *(Prentice-Hall. Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1973; 371 pp., illus., maps, biblio., index, $8.95).*

REVIEWED BY FEROL EGAN

RICHARD DILLON'S LATEST book is a familiar chronicle of how the West was won. Once again, the Indians play the tragic role of heroes who have a just cause, incredible courage, and an inevitable fate. This history of the Modoc War contains all the elements of a Greek tragedy—acted out in the lava beds the Modocs called Land of Burnt-Out Fires.

Betrayed by the United States government's failure to live up to an earlier treaty, the Modocs refused to go into exile. Under the leadership of Captain Jack and his military planner, Scarface Charley, the Modocs put up one of the most incredible battles in the history of any people. The force against them varied from five hundred to one thousand men including regular army, volunteers, and Indian scouts, armed with plenty of rifles, ammunition, howitzers, and food. Against this, Captain Jack had fifty-three warriors. He also had families to protect and a shortage of weapons, ammunition, and food. Yet, for six months in 1872–73, the Modocs held their own.

Popping up from their hiding places in the rough lava terrain, the Modocs made the army pay a heavy price for victory. When General Davis filed his report of dead and wounded on November 1, 1873, the cost of winning was listed as sixty-four dead and sixty-eight wounded—a figure Dillon considers to be on the low side. In contrast, the Modocs lost only six men in direct combat.

The one stain on the Modocs' valiant defense was the murder of General Canby and Reverend Thomas during a meeting with the Modocs to arrange an end to battle. But this betrayal of an agreed-upon truce was not Captain Jack's idea. Rather, it was the plot of some of his most hot-headed warriors.

The murders at the peace tent sealed the fate of Captain Jack and three others. When the battle ended, all four were hanged. Then their heads were cut off and sent to the Army Medical Museum. But the warriors who had demanded the peace tent slaughter were spared because they had betrayed Captain Jack and helped the army defeat him. Even for these traitors, however, there was no future. The Modocs were moved from their homeland to a reservation the government rented from the eastern Shawnees. "There the transplanted Modocs lived and died."

Heroes and cowards, peace-lovers and war hawks, a great Modoc heroine in the person of Toby Riddle, brave white ranchers who stood up for the Modocs against racial bigots—all of these and more fill the pages of this unusual story of a tragic clash between Indians and whites.

Dillon has done a solid job of unearthing all of the pertinent facts, putting them into proper perspective, bringing objectivity to the plight of both sides, and capturing the essence of what Manifest Destiny meant to the Modocs—who paid for American progress with their lives and their land.

Ferol Egan *is the author of* Sand in a Whirlwind: The Paiute Indian War of 1860 *(Doubleday, 1972).*

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The Big Rock Candy Mountain by Wallace Stegner *(Doubleday, Garden City, N.Y., 1973; 611 pp., $8.95).*

REVIEWED BY T. H. WATKINS

"WALLACE STEGNER," novelist Sinclair Lewis wrote in the spring of 1944, "is already one of the most important novelists in America . . . and a number of us go daily to the cathedral and pray that he will get out of Harvard . . . go back to Utah and Iowa, and put on the mantle of greatness that is awaiting him."

The book that inspired this statement was *The Big Rock Candy Mountain*, first published in 1943. Stegner, being wary of hyperbole in general and cynically suspicious of it when applied to himself, would lift an eloquent, tufted eyebrow at that "mantle of greatness" even now, when he has walked away with the 1972 Pulitzer Prize for *Angle of Repose*, his latest novel. Nevertheless, Lewis was entirely correct: Stegner was one of the most important novelists in America in 1944 (as he is today) and *The Big Rock Candy Mountain* was one of his most important novels (as it is today).

We can celebrate the reissue of this book not only in the sense of reunion with an old friend, or because of the happy fact that it may earn the author some of the royalties he missed in 1943, but because it is a book that leaps across a generation's time with not a whit of its muscular perception weakened by the passage of years. It is, above all, a superbly-crafted lesson in the ironies of something-for-nothing, and as such is quite as eloquent and pertinent today as it was thirty years ago.

That lesson is embodied in the almost mindless pilgrimage of Bo and Elsa Mason and their two sons in the early years of the twentieth-century West: he chasing one improvident dream after another from the plains of North Dakota to the flatland wilderness of Saskatchewan, from the streets of Salt Lake City to the green-felt casinos of Reno; she resisting, then accepting her husband's hard-edged, insensate wandering; the two sons dragged along like the tail on a kite, one destroyed, one toughened by the experience. It was a frequently desperate, wracking journey, that pilgrimage—one whose rootlessness and casual cruelty Stegner rightly deplored; yet it was not without hope and even a kind of fierce joy, and in acknowledging that fact Stegner penned remarks that will stand better than most to describe the power of the dream that caused men to erect a civilization in the wilderness: "It was easy to see why men had moved westward as inevitably as the roulette-ball of a sun rolled that way. . . . There were so many chances, such lovely possibilities. And if you missed on the first spin you could double and try again, and keep on doubling till you hit it. You could break the bank, you could bust the sure thing, you could, alone and unarmed, take destiny by the throat."

T. H. Watkins *is an associate editor of* THE AMERICAN WEST *and author of* California: An Illustrated History, *to be published this month by the American West Publishing Company.*

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Jim Beckwourth by Elinor Wilson *(University of Oklahoma, Norman, 1972; 248 pp., illus., biblio., appen., notes, index, $8.95).*

REVIEWED BY ROBERT A. TRENNERT

A SCHOLARLY BIOGRAPHY of Jim Beckwourth, the famous black mountain man, has long been overdue. It is particularly needed today because of the growing movement to document the black role in the opening of the West and because the life of Beckwourth is so obscured in legend. Elinor Wilson has now produced what should hold up in many respects as the definitive work on the life of this historical character, and she has put in proper perspective as much of his personal life as is humanly possible. What emerges, however, may not always be pleasing to Beckwourth romanticizers.

The first thing that becomes apparent in the book is how little is really known today about Beckwourth. Most of what is available comes from his autobiography, *The Life and Adventures of James P. Beckwourth* (1856). Mrs. Wilson has centered her story around this narrative and then done a remarkable piece of research in finding every possible scrap of evidence to separate fact from myth. She uncovers previously unknown features of Beckwourth's early life, including the suprising fact that he probably had little Negro blood, even though his contemporaries usually believed the opposite.

A major contention of the book is that Jim has been slighted because racially prejudiced writers like Francis Parkman made him out to be a "gaudy liar" and a buffoon. While such characterizations undoubtedly harmed his reputation, the true facts of his life do little to give him a more significant place in the history books. It becomes evident that he is not in the same category with Jedediah Smith, Jim Bridger, and Tom Fitzpatrick. For the most part he was an employee of others, and while he certainly was courageous and had many adventures, he did not demonstrate the initiative and drive that made a few mountain men really significant in the history of the Far West. He was, then, one of the better known mountain men of second rank. It appears, in fact, that Beckwourth's color and his autobiography may have been the major factors leading to his renown. Being a man of color in the mountains caused him to be noticed, if even in a prejudiced manner, and his fame spread.

Although establishing Beckwourth's rank as a relatively low one in the fur trade hierarchy, the book does much for Jim's personal reputation. It is quite likely that in this regard he will not be so easily dismissed in the future. Several things about the author's approach to the subject could be improved, however. Despite a vast amount of documentary evidence, she often fills up space with anecdotes. And she has paid almost no attention to the significance of the fur trade itself. Much more might have been done with a biography of Beckwourth in the broader perspective of Dale Morgan's *Jedediah Smith.*

Robert A. Trennert *is assistant professor of history at Temple University in Philadelphia and a charter member of the Western History Association.*

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THE ARENA OF LIFE

(Continued from page 51)

the year but will die if exposed to the heat of a human hand? And that some desert snails may remain alive and dormant without food or water for twenty years?

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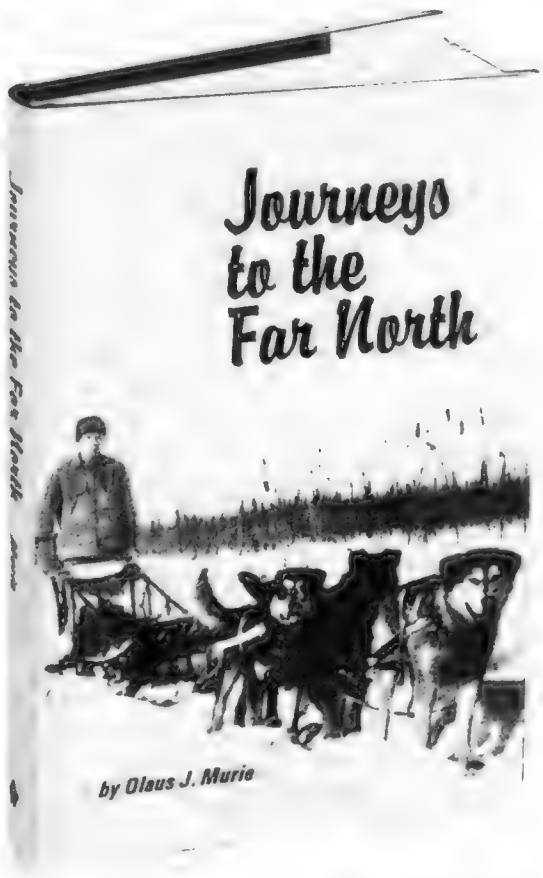
David Cavagnaro *is resident biologist at the Audubon Canyon Ranch, Marin County, Calif., and author of* This Living Earth *(American West, 1972).*



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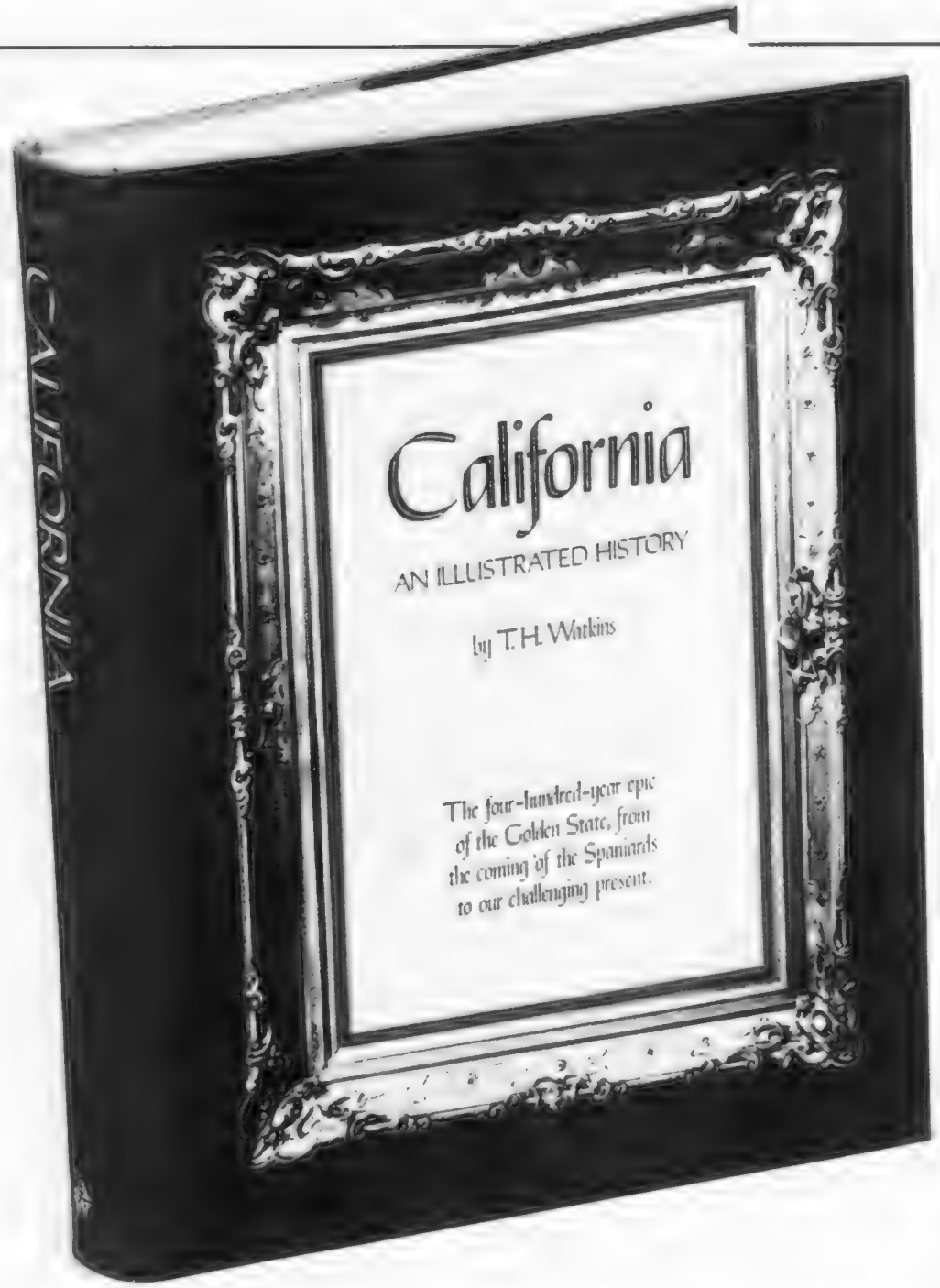

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BOOKS IN BRIEF

By Ed Holm

The Proud Peoples: The Heritage and Culture of Spanish-Speaking Peoples in the United States by Harold J. Alford *(David McKay, New York, 1972; 325 pp., biblio., index, $5.95).*

In this history of Spanish-speaking minorities in the United States, the author discusses the Puerto Rican and Cuban experiences as well as that of the Mexican-Indian-American. A section of the book is devoted to biographies of sixty outstanding Spanish-speaking Americans.

Encyclopedia of Rawhide and Leather Braiding by Bruce Grant *(Cornell Maritime Press, Cambridge, Md., 1972; 528 pp., illus., gloss., biblio., index, $10.00).*

A truly encyclopedic guide to an old western art by an expert. More than two hundred pages of step-by-step illustrations show the reader every conceivable knotting and braiding technique and provide directions for making belts, quirts, crops, and other riding accessories.

Adobes in the Sun: Portraits of a Tranquil Era by Augusta Fink with Ameilie Elkinton and with photographs by Morley Baer *(Chronicle Books, San Francisco, 1972; 144 pp., illus., $14.95).*

This beautiful volume documents three dozen surviving examples of nineteenth-century Spanish-Mexican adobe architecture in northern California. The book's superb photographs and harmonious design project a simple dignity that is also characteristic of the historic buildings described.

Manna: Foods of the Frontier by Gertrude Harris *(101 Productions, San Francisco, 1972; 192 pp., illus., index, $6.95 cloth, $3.95 paper).*

A cookbook that is different. More than three hundred authentic frontier recipes, including those for currant wine, pumpkin soup, herbed turkey pie, mincemeat, and homemade butter—with a rich seasoning of historical notes and anecdotes. A cooking adventure for the purist and entertaining reading for the nostalgist.

Folklore From the Working Folk of America selected and edited by Tristram Potter Coffin and Hennig Cohen *(Anchor Press, Garden City, N.Y., 1973; 464 pp., notes, index, $8.95).*

An anthology of past and present-day American folk tales, songs, verses, riddles, superstitions, expressions, and games.

California: A Pleasure Trip From Gotham to the Golden Gate by Mrs. Frank Leslie, with an introduction by Madeleine B. Stern *(De Graaf Publishers, Netherlands, and Schram Enterprises, New York, 1972; 312 pp., illus., $12.50).*

A facsimile of the original edition, which documented the famous Leslie Transcontinental Excursion of 1877. Tastes of the high and low life in San Francisco and in Virginia City, Nevada, and an interview on polygamy with Mormon leader Brigham Young highlight Mrs. Leslie's perceptive and sometimes surprisingly bold account.

Mint Mark "CC": The Story of the United States Mint at Carson City, Nevada by Howard Hickson *(Nevada State Museum, Carson City, 1972; 124 pp., illus., gloss., biblio., index, $5.95 paper).*

This history of the U.S. Branch Mint at Carson City, which during the years 1870–93 converted millions of dollars in bullion into gold and silver coinage, describes the mechanics of that complicated and fascinating process as well as providing a lively history of the institution's problems with the vagaries of national politics, bullion shortages, and scandal.

Kansas Place-Names by John Rydjord *(University of Oklahoma, Norman, 1972; 613 pp., notes, biblio., index, $20.00).*

Everything one could possibly ever want to know about the origin and background of some three thousand place-names in Kansas. Twelve years of research went into this encyclopedic and entertainingly written source book.

A MATTER OF OPINION

(Continued from page 48)

read and see the pictures of that area. Yet Jackson's idea of a national park in the Sandhills is all but intolerable. Giving the area national recognition under a bureaucratic organization will result in loving it to death with black top roads and hordes of people. I feel we should support the cattleman and encourage him to manage it wisely.

Thomas C. Blunn
Kamiah, Idaho

TO THE EDITOR:

We think you've done a great job with a magazine incorporating old pictures and traditions with some new colored pictures of nature for reminders. . . . Do not get into how life has changed and ecology and relocation of Indians, etc. We who subscribe to your magazine prefer "to live in the past"—we all live with ugly changes.

Jacqueline McCaffrey
San Diego, California

TO THE EDITOR:

I must first of all commend you on an excellent magazine that strikes the difficult balance between academic and popular emphasis. . . . My one regret is the negligible attention paid to the Canadian West. . . . The history of the Canadian West is of equal fascination and academic interest to that of the United States. It is, however, a different history governed by a different political system and a pattern of settlement and law and order unlike that further south. As such, Canadian history makes an interesting contrast and comparison. . . . Such material might expand your readership and would serve to place America's frontier history in a broader context.

John Marsh
Assistant Professor, Trent University
Peterborough, Ontario

TO THE EDITOR:

As the West grows "older" in the sense of its people and their accomplishments it becomes increasingly significant that its history is recorded and represented the way it happened. So much in fiction and drama have been conveyed to the eye and the ear of those who have a penchant for "high noon" interests that we find at times the truly great and important aspects of our historic fabric has been dyed with superficial coloring. . . .

I want to congratulate you on keeping your "heads" in the face of the quasi-hysteria that has beset some publications that are interdependent with ecological and environmental values in the deepest emphasis. I am a member of several conservation groups and have been appalled at the overkill tendency on the part of their representative publications.

Carl R. Rehbock
San Carlos, California

TO THE EDITOR:

The present format of THE AMERICAN WEST seems to me a fine mixture of the past and present history which makes for well balanced reading. Our present concern for conservation and the broader elements of ecology is today's history in the making. Your frequent attention to elements of the natural world is delightful as well as educational, and brings into focus many of these elements which we so often take for granted. The "Sandhills" article in the January 1973 issue is a fine example of human history along with significant ecological features—a very readable bit of man and nature.

Marjorie G. Schmidt
Hayfork, California

TO THE EDITOR:

I like the present direction of the magazine though I do hope that it doesn't take an advocacy role. I am all for advocates and subscribe to various journals that are for this purpose. THE AMERICAN WEST should, it seems to me, be primarily a journal of very readable history.

I do favor the page "A Matter of Opinion," but this should not become a major feature of this type of magazine. It seems to me that it should be largely restricted to corrections, addenda and comments on quality and accuracy.

K. A. Wells
Princeton, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR:

I have enjoyed THE AMERICAN WEST very much starting with the first issue. I would hope that the emphasis of the magazine will continue to be "human history." While I strongly support ecology and conservation, I think that the subject has been pretty thoroughly covered in the popular press, and it is hard to see how much else can be said without being repetitious.

Joseph Buzzo
Pleasanton, California

TO THE EDITOR:

The original purpose of THE AMERICAN WEST is what primarily draws me enthusiastically to reading it since I was a charter subscriber; i.e. the scholarly approach to writings of the American West, clarifying much of the existent mythology. To this end, do not change. . . . Yet, the American West, like the rest of the country, if not more so, is being exploited by those to whom dollars come first. Thus I implore you to continue your "A Matter of Opinion" page, speaking strongly. . . . One journal or magazine cannot tip the lever, but many can. Some, which are more concerned with exploitation need to read what you and others have to say.

Dr. W. C. Starbuck
Houston, Texas

A MATTER OF OPINION *is provided as an open forum. Contributions from our readers are invited, but should be limited to 750 words and must be signed.*

PETER SKENE OGDEN

(Continued from page 47)

forcement of United States trade laws, Ogden remained involved in Hudson's Bay business. His last adventure took him by ship to Washington, D.C., where he negotiated unsuccessfully with President Millard Fillmore for compensation to Hudson's Bay for property that it had lost to the Americans.

Ogden remained in the East for a year, once more visiting the scenes of his youth. On the return journey his ship, the *Tennessee*, was wrecked just off the Golden Gate. Ogden was among those who got ashore safely and made camp. He hid his valise, containing several thousand dollars, under some soiled clothes and walked to Sausalito for horses. Although the camp was looted in his absence, the gold was intact when he returned.

One more year was all that Ogden had left—a few weeks at Fort Vancouver and the remainder at his home in Oregon City. There, in comparative rest he thought back on his adventures, his friends, and the vast unknown territories he'd explored. Ogden died at the age of sixty—leaving behind records of a courageous and danger-filled life.

Clarence P. Socwell *is a bookstore owner and free-lance writer. He resides in the city named for the subject of this article—Ogden, Utah.*

THE FANTASTIC WORLD OF ORTH STEIN

(Continued from page 16)

discovery so marvelous and astounding as to seem more like a tale from the Arabian Nights than a sober nineteenth-century reality.

"Imagination never pictured a wilder or more desolate spot than the western slope of Red Cliff. The ragged rocks and pine-clad gorges are in as native solitude as if the eyes of man had never looked on them, and the tortuous streams, the steep descents torn by some fierce upheaval of nature, and the granite hills combine to form a scene behind which the weirdest imagery of Dore would fall far short. It was in this place that two miners, grubstaked by a Denver speculator, found their way. The names of these men were Jacob Cahee and Louis Adams, the latter a resident of Leadville and the former from some locality in Southern Colorado. . . . Both were mining experts and, finding favorable indications on a wide plain at the foot of quite a steep hill, began to sink a shaft, first passing through thirty feet of wash and then striking a lime formation stained with iron and evidently not in place.

"They were on the point of stopping work in despair, but thus encouraged pushed on their digging with renewed activity until, at a depth of fifteen feet, a hollow sound responding to the blows of their picks gave warning that they were nearing some subterranean passage or gallery. Unwilling to give up what appeared to be so fine a prospect, they secured themselves from the top by ropes and proceeded very cautiously with their work. After half a day's digging, the bottom, which had been constantly growing thinner, gave way with a crash, and the two adventurous miners found themselves suspended midway in what appeared to be a large, irregular cave, some 240 feet long, and about 180 feet wide at its broadest point. They had pierced the cavern in its extremity and had no difficulty in swinging themselves against a sort of natural stairway of granite boulders heaped against the sides.

"Down this they scrambled, impelled by curiosity and a spirit of adventure, holding their miner's lamps above their heads and soon stood upon a tolerably level sanded floor with here and there a huge crystal of quartz, while from the roof, which arched overhead at a distance of about fifty feet, enormous stalactites depended like icicles, and catching the feeble rays of light, threw them back in a myriad of rainbow hues. The cave seemed at first empty, but as their eyes gradually became accustomed to the deep gloom, the men saw in further extremity a huge black object, which, not without some trepidation, they approached.

"As they neared it, to their unbounded amazement, they made out the outlines of some sort of sailing craft, but the idea of a ship fifty feet underground was so preposterous that they thought it some fantastic mass of rocks, and not until they fairly touched the timbers would they believe the evidence of their own senses. A ship it plainly was or had been, but a ship different from any that the eyes of the astonished miners had ever looked upon. It was, as nearly as they could judge, about sixty feet long by some thirty feet wide, and lay tilted forward at an angle of about fifteen degrees over a rough pile of stone. The body of the craft was built of short lengths of some dark and very porous wood, resembling our black walnut if it could be imagined with the grain pulled apart like a sponge or a piece of bread, and made perfectly square.

"Both ends (it was evidently intended for sailing either way) were turned up like the toe of a peaked Moorish slipper. The planking was apparently double-riveted on with nails of extremely hard copper, only slightly rust-eaten, and with the heads cut or filed in an octagonal shape, while along the upper edge of the ship eleven large rings of the same metal and evidently for the securing of rigging, were counted. . . .

"While the whole ship was intact, the wood crumbled like dust beneath the finger's touch and, fearful of trapfalls, the two prospectors did not venture to explore the interior. Lying on the ground nearby, however, was discovered a gold instrument bearing a crude resemblance to the sextant of the present day

and possibly used to calculate the longitude. No trace of any writing was found save at one end of the ship where, about midway on the bow, enclosed in a metal ring, were twenty-six copper characters riveted to wood and bearing much resemblance to the Chinese hieroglyphics of the present day. No human remains of any sort were found, although it is possible that a search of the hold will reveal something of this sort."

Stein traced the miners' departure from the cavern and described their near-disaster on the way out. He ended the story with a note of wonder: "The discovery of the junk-like ship with its unknown architecture, hermetically sealed in a cavern fifty feet below the surface of the earth, gives scope to indefinite speculation. The only possible explanation seems, however, that in ages or aeons, perhaps, agone, a vessel bearing a crew of bold discoverers, tossed by the waves then receding, left it stranded there and the great continental divide, the awful upheavals and convulsions of nature, which we know so little of and can only blindly speculate on, pressed the face of the earth together and sealed it in a living grave. And this is but a groping guess, yet in what strange old seas the vessel sailed, what unknown, ancient waters pressed against its peaked prow, under what pre-historic skies it pitched, what man can tell?"

Is it any great surprise that the rowdy, free-spending residents were willing to accept Stein's detailed fantasies? Even today, nearly a century later and at a time when sophisticated technology has taken man to the moon, the tale has a ring of truth to it. And Stein was adept at questioning the validity of his own fabrications—the more he told his readers how unbelievable they were, the more believable they became. As he continued to exploit his make-believe world, its popularity grew. Readers avidly scanned the *Chronicle* columns, seeking the next Steinian adventure. One of the most interesting of these appeared in the February 19, 1881, *Chronicle*:

TWENTY YEARS

. . . .

The Fate of Three Early Gold Hunters
Who Wandered Into The Homestake District

. . . .

Unearthed and Discovered After Two Decades

After relating how a party of "bearded and blue-shirted argonauts," greedily seeking greater riches, had pierced Tennessee Pass in 1860 and wandered into the Homestake district, Stein described their further travels. "Away to the north, like some talisman set over the hidden treasure of the land, the Holy Cross stretches into the clouds. The miners entered hopefully, courageously—they were never seen again."

But eventually, two decades later, their corpses were discovered in a crude cabin (the bodies had been frozen and were therefore intact). "The place was strewn with pine branches, evidently once forming a bed, and so dry and brittle that they crushed like dust under the feet. There was a small copper-ribbed chest, containing some old clothing and a few mining tools of strange shape among the debris. . . . In one corner of the little copper riveted chest was a tiny buckskin bag, filled with gold dust, much mixed with sand and earth. Around this a piece of paper had been tied, possibly to protect it, and appeared to be a portion of a letter, which had been torn in two. It was written in a cramped hand, beginning abruptly in the middle of a sentence, and read as follows: 'For that, we kept with the stream which led us up into a country which was very wild and desolate, and no part of Kansas seemed to us of so little good. We made some washings in the creek but found little gold, and would have turned back but for fear of the winter which was close at hand. Howsomever, we built this house on the mountain at the foot of the snow which never melts, and God grant it, we will live here till the spring of the year of the Lord 1861. Now we had thought that. . . .'

"Here the letter ended, torn abruptly off. It told the story, and but one theory, that was corroborated by everything that remained. Twenty years before a snow-slide had overwhelmed the cabin and buried it from mortal ken, until two decades later another avalanche had torn it from its sepulchre and laid it open to the air.

"All this flashed through the discoverers' minds, and oppressed with the awful presence of the dead, doubly uncanny in their strange old habiliments, they hurried from the spot. Arriving at Eagle City, they lost no time in informing the authorities, and a visit was paid two days afterward to the spot. The facts stated were then fully corroborated, and information sent to the authorities in this city."

IT SEEMS REASONABLE that Davis was aware of and condoned the hoaxes perpetrated by his talented, if sometimes misdirected, city editor. Certainly circulation and readership were as important then as now, particularly when the "Cloud City" residents were offered a choice between R. G. Dill's *Herald*, John M. Barret's *Democrat*, and the *Chronicle*.

Davis was quick to praise Orth Stein, considering him a kind of tragic hero who turned to fantasy rather than face the sorrow, the tragedy, and the pathos of the real world. In his memoirs Davis devoted many pages to Stein's journalistic talents of the legitimate variety. He especially praised his perceptiveness and insight, citing an example:

"One day soon after the assassination of President Garfield, a quiet little woman, with mysterious air, called at the office and purchased a copy of each issue since the event. She explained that she had been in the mountains for a fortnight, and had not heard of the tragedy until that day.

"The incident attracted the particular attention only of Stein. He reasoned that the woman had some peculiar motive for desiring the complete file, and scented a story back of the palpable nervousness and wistfulness displayed. Adroit probing, while she tarried in the office, developed little, but sufficient to warrant Stein following the woman to her home in the suburbs. There, after gaining admission by a ruse, he applied the 'third degree' with such vigor as to uncover the fact that the mysterious woman was Mrs. Guiteau [the ex-wife of the president's assassin].

"Once the disclosure was made, Stein's abundant evidence of her identity, in a batch of letters from her husband, supplemented with a document of more than ordinary human interest at the time, comprehending a large lithographed marriage license, adorned with portraits of the high contracting parties, her recital of the lives and experiences of self and husband, contained a vast fund of illuminating information, especially regarding Guiteau himself, about whose history and antecedents the entire nation was excessively eager to learn.

"This data, plus the employment of Stein's rare imaginative faculties, culminated in a story of extraordinary interest, that was quickly reproduced in every newspaper in the land."

Stein's interview with Mrs. Guiteau, first published in the *Chronicle* of July 8, 1881, exhibited the same flair for the dramatic that had accented his fictional adventures. The account revealed the details of the assassin's married life—his fondness for "fast houses," the "dreadful disease" he eventually contracted, the divorce which followed—and ended with this exchange:

"How do you regard on the whole Guiteau's attack on the President?"

"I can form no idea as to what his motive might have been except, perhaps, to push himself into public notice. He should be shut up where he can't do anybody any harm. But I don't believe he should go to a lunatic asylum."

"Your theory, then, if you have one, is that the shooting was done to gain notoriety?"

"Yes sir, I do. He had a morbid desire to become famous and have everybody talking about him. I think he would gladly have given up his life for this."

It wasn't the greatest story ever written and Orth Stein wasn't the greatest writer in the world—but there was a flicker of genius in the man, and for a while it appeared that his star was rising, that his career in the hectic frontier town of Leadville was only the stepping-stone to some higher pinnacle. But Leadville was the beginning and the end. In 1882 he left the Carbonate Camp and, under an assumed name, worked as a reporter for the *Kansas City Star.* A fellow journalist, E. D. Cowen, discussed possible reasons behind Stein's decline: "It may be questioned whether Stein was sane during the years after he had been set upon by some unknown person and beaten almost to death with a bludgeon one night in 1883 near the old Palace Theatre [in Denver]. Until that assault occurred, he seemed to have as keen moral perceptions as anyone. Shortly afterwards he assassinated a variety theatre keeper named Fredericks at Kansas City, in a petty quarrel over a Ganymede of the boxes."

According to Cowen, Stein's mother saved him from paying the penalty for his crime, spending "a small fortune in his deliverance." And his father, says Cowen, "died from a broken heart at the disgrace in which the son had involved the family." Davis disagrees with this account, insisting that an uncle, Godlove S. Orth, intervened and won an acquittal for his nephew.

Little is known of Stein following these events. If Davis had knowledge of his activities, he kept the facts secret, believing that "there will be no profit in pursuing him through a subsequent career of crime, or waste time in guessing what particular jail or penitentiary claims him for a guest."

But Cowen revealed that, after the Kansas City trial, "Stein embarked on an adventurer's career, which was punctuated at intervals by brilliant work in the eastern cities. Confidence operations of a peculiarly daring and unscrupulous nature subsequently outlawed him in the North," and finally, Cowen wrote, "Orth Stein died at New Orleans."

Circumstances surrounding his death were suspect, but an obituary appearing in the *Lafayette (Indiana) Daily Courier* on April 27, 1901, seems to provide a valid, if innocuous, explanation: "Orth Harper Stein died yesterday in New Orleans of consumption. He had been ill for some time. His mother and sister arrived at his bedside the day before he died and accompanied the body to Lafayette, where burial was made in the family lot in Greenbush cemetery."

During the period that Stein had been in custody, Davis had continued to praise him in the columns of the *Chronicle,* defining him as "a writer of sensational and at the same time attractive articles. . . . His greatest fault (if it be a fault) was his love of women, and it was this that has got him into his present trouble.

"He made a good many enemies by his scathing articles. He was reckless of money, did not know its value, and frequently involved himself in embarrassment by his extravagance. . . .

"Generous in his nature he was ungenerous in his profession. He would befriend a man personally and yet do him terrible harm professionally, simply from a false idea of the value of news. . . .

"He knew no pity, and so when the great misfortune overtook him there were many who not only rejoiced in his fate and spread the story of his fall to suit their own malice, but actually lent their assistance, their money, and energy increased by the tremendous power of malice to the end that the man should be destroyed."

Thirty-three years later, Carlyle Davis paid final homage to his former employee, devoting a chapter in his book to Stein ("The Brilliant Career of Orth Stein, a Strangely Contradictory Character"): "His mind was as active as the fan of an aeroplane, as clear as the tones of a bell; his instinct keen and alert; his insight into the springs of human thought and action marvelously clear; his conception of the laws of proportion accurate; his judgment faultless. . . . His peer as a reporter has never yet been born. And good newspaper men are always born, never made."

Orth Stein was but a moment in the settling and development of the dynamic American frontier. But he must always remain a part of its heritage.

Donald E. Bower *is editor of* THE AMERICAN WEST.

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Forthcoming in
THE AMERICAN WEST

The July issue of THE AMERICAN WEST—in a departure from the usual format—will be devoted entirely to the subject of the American Indian:

In **Beauty for New Life: An Introduction to Cheyenne Art,** Father Peter J. Powell shares the fruits of his twenty years of research into an art that reflects a people's religion, traditions, vitality, and oneness with the earth.

The "extermination" of the Indian by the white man during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries has become one of the most emotionally charged and clouded topics of historical interest today. Don Russell boldly challenges popular concepts regarding the white man's treatment of the "vanishing race" in **How Many Indians Were Killed?**

For a full century, with brief interludes for foreign and civil wars, policing the Indian frontier was the primary mission of the U.S. Army. Robert M. Utley discusses aspects of this role in **The Chained Dog: Strategies of the Indian-Fighting Army.**

Indian cultures reflected the environment and were as varied as the land itself. Two of the most highly developed and uniquely interesting of these are described in **Indians of the Great Plains** by Francis Haines, Sr., and **Indians of the Northwest Coast** by Michael Ames.

Wind-rippled dunes near Florence, Oregon, were photographed by Ed Cooper.